

# Safe, Healthy Foods and Drinks

## Drinks

### Water

Water is the best drink for your child.

**Starting at 6 months**, give your toddler small amounts of water in an open cup between meals and breastfeedings.

- ✓ If your home was built before 1989, you may have lead pipes. Flush them each morning by running your water for 1 to 5 minutes or until it turns cold.
- ✓ If you have your own private water supply, have your water tested according to provincial guidelines. Learn more at [healthlinkbc.ca](http://healthlinkbc.ca).
- ✓ Always follow “boil water” advisories in your area.



### HOW TO

#### Check drinking-water advisories online

- For provincial advisories, visit [gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/water-quality/drinking-water-quality/notices-boil-water-advisories](http://gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/water-quality/drinking-water-quality/notices-boil-water-advisories).
- For First Nations Health Authority advisories, visit [fnha.ca/what-we-do/environmental-health/drinking-water-advisories](http://fnha.ca/what-we-do/environmental-health/drinking-water-advisories).

## Milk

**Between 9 and 12 months**, you can start offering your toddler pasteurized whole (3.25%) cow’s milk or fortified goat’s milk, as long as she also eats a variety of iron-rich foods like meat, fish, poultry, eggs, tofu, iron-fortified cereals, beans, peas and lentils. Offer her 2 cups (500 ml) of milk every day if she no longer breastfeeds.

**At 24 months**, you might choose to switch to lower-fat cow’s milk (1% or 2%). If your child is over 24 months and doesn’t drink cow’s milk or fortified goat’s milk, offer her unsweetened soy beverage fortified with calcium and vitamin D.

- ✓ Limit milk to no more than 3 cups (750 ml) per day, so your toddler has room for other healthy foods.
- ✗ Avoid letting your toddler sip milk between meals or snacks, which can lead to tooth decay.



### DID YOU KNOW

Plant-based drinks from rice, potato, almond, hemp and coconut milk don’t have enough calories, fat or protein for your growing toddler. Don’t offer them in place of human milk, cow’s milk, formula or fortified soy beverage.



### DID YOU KNOW

Your toddler can continue to breastfeed or drink expressed human milk until she’s 24 months or older.

## Fruit Juice

Fruit juice is a sugary drink that children don’t need. Offer vegetables and fruits instead. If you do offer juice, serve it at meal or snack time.

- ✓ Limit fruit juice to ½ cup (125 ml) a day.
- ✓ Offer fruit juice in an open cup. Using a bottle can cause tooth decay.

## Drinks to avoid

- ✗ **Sugary drinks** like fruit juice, fruit and fruit-flavoured drinks made from powders or crystals, pop, sports drinks, and slush drinks. These have too much sugar and not enough of the nutrients toddlers need.
- ✗ **Drinks with caffeine** like soft drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks, coffee, coffee-slush drinks, tea and hot chocolate. These can make your toddler excited and anxious and make sleep more difficult.
- ✗ **Fruit juices** labelled “unpasteurized” may contain dangerous bacteria.
- ✗ **Toddler nutritional supplement drinks** aren’t needed.

If you’re concerned about your child’s food intake or growth, talk with your health care provider.



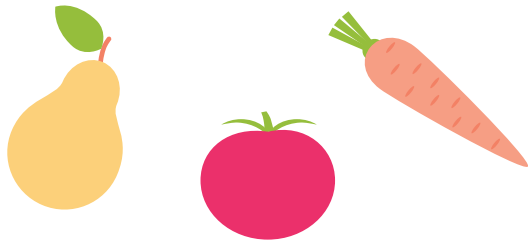
### TRY THIS

With meals, offer milk. Between meals, offer water. And continue to breastfeed for as long as you choose.

## Foods

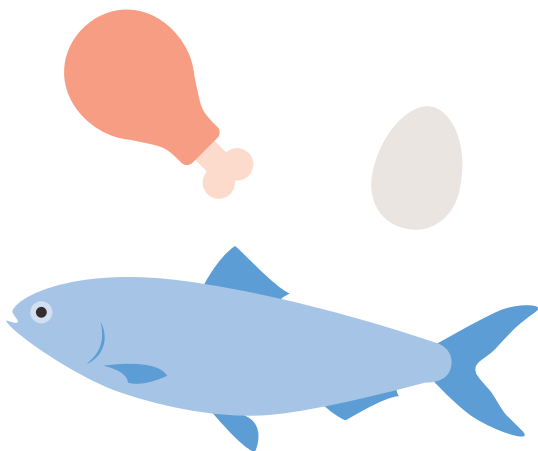
### Vegetables and fruit

All vegetables and fruit – fresh, frozen, canned and dried – are healthy choices when they're prepared and stored safely.



### Meat, fish, poultry, seafood and eggs

Reduce the risk of food poisoning by cooking all meats until they're brown (not pink) and the liquids run clear. Cook fish until it flakes with a fork. Cook eggs until yolks are hard. Try braising and stewing to keep meats soft enough for your toddler to chew.



## Fish

Fish provides many nutrients including protein and omega-3 fats, which are important for brain and eye development. Offer it to your child regularly. Some fish, though, is high in mercury, and should be limited.



### BE AWARE

Fish high in mercury can damage your toddler's growing brain.

**High-mercury fish** – serve in limited amounts only:

- fresh and frozen tuna
- canned albacore tuna from outside of Canada
- shark
- marlin
- swordfish
- escolar
- orange roughy

**If your child is 6 to 12 months**, offer no more than 40 grams (less than 1 oz) a month.

**If your child is 24 to 36 months**, offer no more than 75 grams (2½ oz) a month.

**Fish not high in mercury** – serve regularly:

- all other fish sold in Canada
- canned light tuna including skipjack, yellowfin and tongol
- Canadian albacore tuna (fresh, frozen and canned). Look for "Product of Canada" on the label.

## Foods to avoid

- ✗ **Honey** can give your baby botulism, a food-borne illness. Never give honey or foods containing honey to a child less than 1 year old.
- ✗ **Sprouts** (like alfalfa and mung bean) can contain harmful bacteria. Only give them to your toddler if they're thoroughly cooked.
- ✗ **Unpasteurized cheese** made from raw milk may contain harmful bacteria that can cause toddlers to become very sick or even die. Check the label, and choose only cheeses made from pasteurized milk.

### Highly processed foods

Highly processed foods – store-bought and from restaurants – are high in salt, sugar and saturated fats. Offer them less often and in smaller amounts. Try:

- offering water instead of sugary drinks
- limiting processed meats like ham, bacon, sausage, hot dogs and luncheon meats
- reducing store-bought cookies, cakes, candy, chocolate, chips and salty snacks
- offering fewer frozen packaged foods like pizza and pasta
- choosing healthier menu options when eating out
- making homemade versions of favorite restaurant foods like fries, chicken strips and pizza

