



EASY TODDLER

MEALS

Your toddler is growing and learning so many new things! He is learning how to use a cup, a spoon, and how to feed himself.

With his tiny tummy, every bite of food and sip of drink matters. Offer nutritious foods and regular meals and snacks to help him stay healthy, grow well and learn.

WHAT SHOULD MY TODDLER EAT?

Your toddler should be eating most of the same foods you and your family eat. He is still learning how to chew and swallow new foods, so it is important to offer foods safe for him to eat.

- **TEXTURE:** Cut foods into $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch pieces. Offer foods that are soft-cooked, easy to chew and swallow.
- **VARIETY:** Help your whole family stay healthy by offering a variety of fruits and veggies, lean protein, and whole grains every day. The more variety of flavors your child eats, the more foods he will learn to like.

FOOD SAFETY TIPS

- Choking hazards: stay away from large chunks of food, sticky foods, or other choking hazards like whole grapes, hot dogs, and marshmallows.
- Avoid foods that have bacteria and can make your child sick:
 - Raw and unpasteurized foods: such as raw milk, unpasteurized cheese and raw fish (sushi).
 - Undercooked meat, chicken or eggs.
 - Cold hot dogs, bologna, or other lunchmeats. If you do offer them, heat until steaming hot and cool before serving.



ABCS OF EASY MEALS:

Allow your child to decide. As a parent, your job is to decide what, when, and where to offer meals and snacks. Your child's job is to decide which foods and how much of the foods he will eat.

Be patient. Toddlers can be messy when they eat – this is how they learn. Try not to worry about spills.

Choose to eat as a family. Let your toddler eat at the table with the rest of the family.

QUICK & SIMPLE MEALS

- Beans served over brown rice with a side of fruit.
- Cut up grilled cheese sandwich with a side of vegetables.
- Sautéed vegetables and chopped chicken served over whole grain pasta.
- Boiled chicken with vegetables, tofu and rice.

TIPS:

Offer your toddler small portion sizes. If he is still hungry, you can offer more.

If your child is not interested in eating, that is OK. Begging or forcing your toddler to eat or “clean his plate” can lead to overeating and weight problems.

Encourage everyone to stay at the table and talk until the whole family is finished.

LET YOUR TODDLER TRY TO FEED THEMSELVES

- Give him finger foods.
- Learning to eat can be messy.
- Let him learn to eat with a soft spoon.
- Put the food in small bowl with sides so he can push the foods onto the spoon.

