

# TODDLER NUTRITION

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Presentation adapted from New Vision Family Health Team  
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Building a  
healthy  
toddler  
1-2 years

# OUTLINE

- Development of feeding skills
- Normal eating habits of children
- The feeding relationship
- Nutrition recommendations (iron and vitamin D)
- Tips to help reduce picky eating

# DEVELOPMENT OF FEEDING SKILLS

- By 12 months, toddlers can handle chopped or soft table foods
- Between 18 – 24 months, your child will be able to accept a wide range of textures (meats, raw fruits and vegetables) → family meal!
- Progression to self-feeding
- Growing independence (preferences)

# DEVELOPMENT OF FEEDING SKILLS

- Parents should encourage self-feeding skills and exploration of new foods/textures
- Focus on family meals with pleasant feeding environment and minimal distractions
- Risk of choking is high:
  - Make sure toddler is always seated during meals and snacks
  - Hard candy, popcorn, nuts, whole grape and hot dogs should be avoided

# NORMAL EATING HABITS OF TODDLERS

- Unable to sit still (for very long)
- May gag at new textures
- Likes to play with food (makes a mess)
- “food jags” – refuses to try new foods or wanting to eat the same food all the time
- Refuses to eat/only wants to self-feed
- Appetite varying from day to day
- Wants food in a certain way (food arrangements, textures)
- Likes a food one day and not the next
- Demonstrating strong food preferences and dislikes

# THE FEEDING RELATIONSHIP

- You are the greatest influence on your child's relationship with food
- The way **how** you feed your children is just as important as **what** you feed your children.
- The golden rule of feedings:
  - You do your job, the child does their job, no one does the other's job

# THE FEEDING RELATIONSHIP

## *Ellyn Satter – Division of Responsibility*

- **The parent:** Responsible for *what, when, where*
  - Parent's plan and prepare meals
  - Parent's decide when meals and snacks are served
  - Parent's decide where child will eat the meal or snack
- **The child:** Responsible for *how much & whether*
  - Child uses hunger/satiety cues to determine how much
  - Child will decide whether they will or will not eat

# THE FEEDING RELATIONSHIP

## *Ellyn Satter – Division of Responsibility*

- Allows children to regulate food intake based on **internal appetite cues**
- Utilizes principles of “responsive feeding”
  - Parent or caregiver responds in a prompt, emotionally supportive, and developmentally appropriate manner to the child's hunger and satiety cues.
  - Children will compensate for eating less on some days or at a particular meal by eating more at other meals.

# SETTING UP FOR A PLEASANT MEAL

- Eat in a comfortable place
  - Minimize distractions (no toys, no electronics)
  - Have everything ready on the table at once
- Keep meals within an appropriate timeframe
  - Main meals: 30-40min
  - Snacks: 15-20min
- Keep it pleasant
  - Engage in positive conversation (i.e. check in with each other, avoid conflicts)
  - Do not focus on your child's eating

# IMPORTANT NUTRIENTS

- **Iron**

- A mineral needed by our bodies. Iron helps carry oxygen to all parts of the body.
- Iron is important as it gives your child the energy to play, run, concentrate and learn.
- Recommended intake: 7.0mg/d for 1-3yr olds.

- **Food sources of iron:**

- Heme iron: animal products such as red meat, fish and poultry.
- Non-heme iron: plant sources such as grains, beans, legumes, nuts and vegetables.

# IMPORTANT NUTRIENTS

- **Vitamin D**

- Helps absorb calcium and promotes proper bone growth and development.
- Serious deficiency can cause rickets, delayed motor development, muscle weakness and fractures.
- Recommended intake: 600IU/d

- **Food sources of vitamin D:**

- Foods naturally containing vitamin D: Fatty fish (salmon, sardines), mushrooms and egg yolks.
- Foods with added vitamin D: margarine, some dairy products, all infant formulas.

# WHAT DOES A BALANCED MEAL LOOK LIKE?



# CANADA FOOD GUIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

- For toddlers 12-24 months:
  - Offer a variety of foods from the four food groups
  - Let your child decide how much to eat
  - Offer small portions ( $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a Food Guide Serving)

# CANADA FOOD GUIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

<b>Food Group</b>	<b>Age 24-36 months</b>	<b>What is one food guide serving?</b>
<b>Vegetables and Fruit</b>	<b>4 Food Guide servings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ½ cup fresh, frozen or canned vegetables</li><li>• ½ cup fresh, frozen or canned fruit</li><li>• 1 cup leafy greens</li></ul>
<b>Grain Products</b>	<b>3 Food Guide servings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 slice of bread or ½ bagel</li><li>• ½ large pita or tortilla</li><li>• ½ cup cold cereal</li><li>• ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, quinoa, couscous</li></ul>
<b>Milk and Alternatives</b>	<b>2 Food Guide servings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 cup milk</li><li>• ¾ cup yogurt</li><li>• 1.5 oz. cheese</li></ul>
<b>Meat and Alternatives</b>	<b>1 Food Guide serving</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 eggs</li><li>• 2 Tbsp. nut butter</li><li>• ¾ cup legumes</li><li>• ½ cup cooked fish, meat or poultry (4 oz.)</li></ul>

# TEN TIPS TO HELP OVERCOME PICKY EATING



# TIP 1 – RESPECT APPETITE

- Growth, activity, illness can all affect appetite
- Trust that your child knows when they are hungry or full
- When serving meals & snacks start with a small portion and serve more if asked
- Allowing the child to stop eating when full helps develop proper hunger and satiety cues

## TIP 2 – STICK TO ROUTINE

- Aim to offer **3 meals plus 2-3 snacks** daily
- Offer meals and snacks at set times everyday
- Limit grazing between meals and snacks (this can reduce appetite)
- A regular schedule of meals and snacks will help young children to develop healthy eating habits
- Frequent, nutrient-dense meals and snacks are important to meet a young child's needs for energy and nutrients (WHO 2000)

# HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS

- Apple slices with peanut butter
- Peanut butter banana sandwich on whole wheat bread
- Berries with a yogurt cup
- Cheese string and whole grain crackers
- Ham and cheese roll ups on a small whole wheat tortilla wrap
- Vegetable sticks with hummus
- Small bowl of vegetable soup with whole grain crackers
- Grapes and cheddar cheese slices
- Yogurt with whole grain granola
- Fruit kabobs made with pineapple, strawberries, melon and oranges
- Homemade trail mix made with crushed walnuts, almonds, sunflower seeds and peanuts
- Hard boiled egg and half an English muffin
- Half of a toasted tomato sandwich
- Small homemade muffin with a glass of milk
- Cottage cheese and pineapple (or other fruit of choice)
- Vegetable sandwich on whole grain bread with cream cheese, cucumber and tomato slices
- Whole grain pita with hummus dip
- Half of a tuna sandwich on whole wheat bread
- Fruit smoothie made with handful of spinach, frozen strawberries (or any other berry of choice), milk and yogurt

## TIP 3 – BE PATIENT

- It can take a child 10 or more times of trying a food before liking it
- A child may smell a food, lick it, bite it, play with it before actually trying it and liking it
- Provide positive encouragement each time
- Plate a small portion at first so it is not overwhelming
- Start slow – even trying one bite is a step in the right direction!

## TIP 4 – MAKE IT FUN AND BE CREATIVE

- Vegetables & fruits do not have to be boring!
- Create fun shapes, recipes or activities to increase interest in a new foods
- Add flavour to vegetables by using a variety of herbs, spices, cheese and sauces!
- Create casserole/mixed dishes that incorporate a variety of vegetables and colours
- Create a sticker chart to encourage your child to try a variety of colourful fruits and vegetables

Keep track of the colors you eat each day!

Blue &  
Purple



Green



White &  
Brown



Yellow &  
Orange



Red



Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

## TIP 5 – RECRUIT YOUR CHILD’S HELP

- Involve your child in meal planning and preparation – Children may be willing to try more foods they have helped pick or prepare
- Bring your child to the grocery store and allow them to pick new fruits or vegetables they would like to try
- Allow your child to assist in the preparation of that food

# KITCHEN ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR TODDLER

- At 2 years:
  - Wipe tables
  - Hand items to adult to put away (such as after grocery shopping)
  - Place things in trash
  - Tear lettuce or greens
  - Help “read” a cookbook by turning the pages
  - Make “faces” out of pieces of fruits and vegetables
  - Rinse vegetables or fruits
  - Snap green beans

## TIP 6 – SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

- Children learn how to eat by watching others
- Set a good example by eating a variety of fruits and vegetables and other foods
- If you don't like a specific food, it does not mean your child won't like it – try serving them a variety of foods and let them develop their own taste preferences
- Have meals at the table together - make mealtimes a positive experience
- Positive conversations at mealtimes can reduce mealtime stress (i.e. asking how everyone's day went)

## TIP 7 – LIMIT BEVERAGES BETWEEN MEALS

- Your child may not be hungry because they are filling up on juice or milk between meals
- Offer water to drink between meals
- Limit milk intake to 2-3 cups per day
- Limit 100% fruit juice intake to ½ cup per day!
- Limit sugar sweetened beverages such as pop or fruit cocktail – they are high in sugar and void of other valuable nutrients

# TIP 8 – REDUCE DISTRACTIONS AT MEAL TIMES

- Hunger and satiety cues can be masked if eating while distracted
- Turn off the TV (and other electronic distractions) during meal times
- Friendly discussion at meal times without distractions can help create a more positive, relaxed environment which may initiate the consumption of new foods

## TIP 9 – DO NOT OFFER DESSERT AS A REWARD

- Offering “treats” or “unhealthy snacks” can undermine healthy eating
- Interferes with satiety and hunger cues as the child may overeat just to get the “treat”
- Teaches them to reward themselves with food which can lead to unhealthy habits in the future

## TIP 10 – DO NOT BE A SHORT ORDER COOK

- Do not prepare a separate meal for your picky eater!
- Most children prefer sweet foods over other foods, however, it doesn't mean they won't eat other foods or that they don't need them
- Child catch on quickly that if they refuse what is being served they will get foods they ask for!
- Children will not starve themselves – if they don't like what is being served, let them know they have to wait until the next meal to eat

# QUESTIONS

Thank you!