



Nutrition for Children

Guidelines for Healthy Eating

Birth to 2 Years Old

- Breast-feed your baby from birth to 6 months of age. Breast-feed for the first year, if you can. If you can't breast-feed or don't want to, give iron-enriched formula (not cow's milk) for the first 12 months. After that and up to age 2, use whole cow's milk to replace formula or breast milk. Don't limit fat for the first 2 years of life.
- Follow your child's doctor's advice on breast-feeding and what formula and vitamins to give your baby. Breast-fed babies who do not get regular exposure to sunlight may need vitamin D supplements.
- Start solid foods as advised by your baby's doctor. It is common to do this at 4 to 6 months of age. Iron-enriched infant rice cereal is usually the first food given.
- Start new foods one at a time. Wait 1 week before adding each new cereal, vegetable, or other food. Doing this makes it easier to find out which foods your baby has a problem with.
- Use iron-rich foods, such as grains, iron-enriched cereals, and meats.
- Do not give honey to infants during the first 12 months of life.
- Don't let a baby fall asleep with a bottle that has formula, juice, or milk. The sugars in these can cause tooth decay.



Give your child appropriate foods for his or her age.

Two Years and Older

- Give a variety of healthy foods for meals and snacks. Follow guidelines from the ChooseMyPlate.gov/kids Web site. Let your child choose which healthy foods and how much to eat to satisfy his or her hunger.
- Help your child maintain a healthy weight. Give proper foods. Promote regular exercise. Lead by example. Children learn from what they see parents do, as well as, from what parents say. Eat with your children. Be a role model for good eating. Exercise, too.
- Let your child help plan meals and snacks, shop for food, and prepare foods.
- Don't force your child to eat certain foods. Don't use food to reward or punish behavior.
- Don't give foods that can lead to choking, such as hard candies and whole grapes.
- Teach healthy behaviors in a fun way. For ideas to help get children to eat well and be more active, access the Web sites in the box below.

Get more information from:

ChooseMyPlate.gov
www.choosemyplate.gov/kids

5-2-1-0 Let's Go!
www.letsgo.org

We Can![™] Ways to Enhance Children's
 Activity & Nutrition
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan