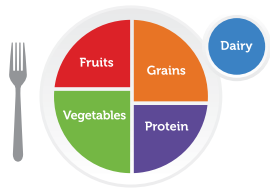


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# Healthy Eating for Infants

Healthy eating is important at every age. When it's time for solid foods, offer babies a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding on foods and beverages, choose options that are full of nutrients and lower in sodium and avoid added sugars. Start with these tips:



## Feeding your young baby

If possible, feed your baby only breast milk from birth to about 6 months of age, and continue through at least the first year of life—longer if desired. If breast milk is unavailable, feed your baby iron-fortified infant formula. Talk to your healthcare provider about vitamin D supplements for your baby.



## Look for cues

When babies are hungry, they usually let you know. But fullness cues are not as obvious. Babies may be full if they close their mouth, turn their head away from breast or bottle, or relax their hands. Recognizing and responding to these cues helps children learn how to self-regulate their intake.



## Starting solid foods

At about 6 months, infants may show signs that they're ready for solid foods, such as bringing objects to the mouth or swallowing food rather than pushing it out. Do not put infant cereal or other solid foods in an infant's bottle, but small amounts of water may also be introduced when your baby starts solid foods.



## Serving first foods

Introduce a variety of foods, flavors, and textures from all food groups. Include foods rich in iron and zinc, particularly for breastfed infants. Examples include lean meats, fortified infant cereals, and beans.



## Prevent choking

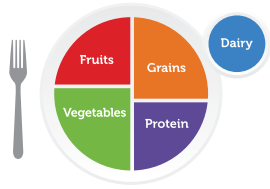
Make sure your baby is sitting in a highchair or other safe, supervised place for meals and snacks. Offer foods that are the appropriate size, consistency, and shape for your child's age and eating skills.



## Serving safe foods

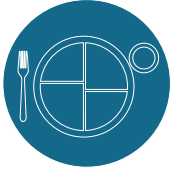
Avoid feeding your baby any foods that contain raw or cooked honey. Honey can contain bacteria that could cause serious illness or death among infants. Also avoid unpasteurized foods or beverages, such as juices, milk, yogurt, or cheeses, as they could contain harmful bacteria.

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# Healthy Eating for Toddlers

Healthy eating is important at every age. Offer toddlers a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding on foods and beverages, choose options that are full of nutrients and lower in sodium and avoid added sugars. Start with these tips:



## Provide foods full of nutrients

Offer your toddler a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. Avoid foods and beverages with added sugars and choose those with lower sodium.



## Look for cues

When children are hungry, they usually let you know. But fullness cues are not as obvious. Children may be full if they push food away, close mouth, turn head away from food, or make sounds to let you know. Recognizing and responding to these cues helps children learn how to self-regulate their intake.



## Prevent choking

Have toddlers sit at a table for meals and snacks and not wander around with food in their mouth. Foods such as hot dogs, candy, nuts and seeds, raw carrots, grapes, popcorn, and chunks of peanut butter can be choking risks. See the [USDA Team Nutrition worksheet](#) for more.



## Drinks matter too!

Did you know the only beverages your toddler needs are water, milk, and, if available, breast milk? Avoid drinks with added sugars like soda, flavored milks, juice drinks, and sports drinks.



## Try new foods

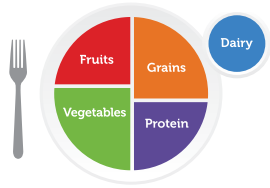
Try serving a new food alongside a familiar food in the same meal. It may take up to 8 to 10 tries for a child to accept a new food.



## Serve safe food

Help your child learn to wash their hands before eating. Only serve foods that have been cooked properly and avoid serving your toddler unpasteurized (raw) juice or milk.

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# Healthy Eating for Women Who Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what to eat or drink, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



## Eat a variety of healthy foods

It's important to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. Choose options for meals, beverages, and snacks that have limited added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium (salt).



## Get your Plan

Calorie and nutrient needs are different during pregnancy and when you are breastfeeding. Get your [MyPlate Plan](#) to learn your estimated calorie needs and how to meet your food group goals.



## Make smart seafood choices

Eating seafood during pregnancy may benefit your baby's growth and is a healthy protein source for you during both pregnancy and breastfeeding. Choose options lower in methylmercury, like cod, salmon, or tilapia. Learn more at FDA's [Advice About Eating Fish](#) webpage.



## Ask about supplements

In addition to a healthy diet, your doctor may recommend a prenatal vitamin and mineral supplement to help you meet your needs. After pregnancy, your doctor may recommend switching from a prenatal to a multivitamin supplement during breastfeeding.



## Keep food safe

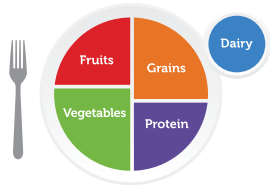
You and your baby are at higher risk for foodborne illness. Only eat foods that have been cooked to the proper temperature and avoid unpasteurized (raw) milk or juice, raw sprouts, unwashed produce, cold deli meats, or soft cheese made from unpasteurized milk. See [FoodSafety.gov](#) for more information.



## Avoid all alcohol

Pregnant women and women who may become pregnant should not drink any alcohol. Talk with your doctor before considering drinking alcohol while you are breastfeeding.

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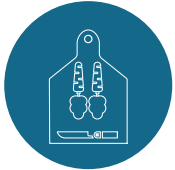
# Healthy Food Prep

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what to eat or drink, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



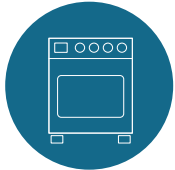
## Think balance

Include a variety of delicious foods from all five food groups—fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives—when making meals.



## Chop fresh produce in advance

Cut up fresh fruits like melons and pineapples, and veggies like carrots and broccoli, when you have a few minutes. Store them in the fridge for meals and snacks.



## Bake, grill, broil, or roast

Limit frying—especially deep frying—to reduce saturated fat and calories in the dishes you make. Most recipes can be adapted for healthier cooking methods.



## Sweeten foods with fruit

Mix fruit into plain yogurt, cooked oatmeal, and smoothies to sweeten without adding sugar. Or, use that plain yogurt, uncooked oats, and fruit for some overnight oats.



## Find more flavor

Add a squeeze of lemon or lime juice to cooked vegetables and meat, chicken, or fish. Experiment with low-salt herbs and spices.

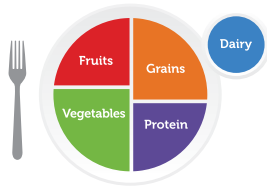


## Read food labels

Use the [Nutrition Facts label](#) to find out how much added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium (salt) are in the packaged foods you eat. Adjust your cooking methods and other ingredients accordingly.



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## Focus on Whole Fruits

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what fruits to eat, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



### Include fruit at breakfast

Top cereal with your favorite seasonal or frozen fruit, add bananas or chopped apples to pancakes, or mix raisins into hot oatmeal.



### Take fruit on the go

Fruits like oranges, bananas, and apples are great portable snacks. You can also bring along a can of mandarin oranges or pineapple chunks packed in water.



### Make your own trail mix

Combine one or two favorite breakfast cereals with dried cranberries and raisins. Bring for a snack in a small sealable bag or container.



### Enjoy fruit as a snack

Make fruit kabobs using melon chunks, bananas, and grapes. Top with a light yogurt sauce for a fruity snack or side dish.



### Add fruit at dinner

Chop up a combination of tropical or seasonal fruits to make a fruit salsa to top fish or chicken, or add fruit like grapefruit sections, apple wedges, or grapes to a tossed salad.

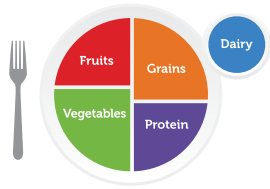


### Keep fruit on hand

Cut up fruit and place in a bowl in the refrigerator. Put the bowl at the front of the shelf so that it's the first thing you see when you open the door.



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## Vary Your Vegetables

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what vegetables to eat, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



### Start your day with vegetables

Add leftover cooked vegetables to your omelet or breakfast wrap. Or, add spinach to a morning smoothie and enjoy a burst of flavor and nutrition!



### Add variety to salads

Make your salad pop with color and flavor by including corn kernels, radish slices, or diced red onions. Include seasonal vegetables for variety throughout the year.



### Try a stir-fry

Stir-fry vegetables like carrots, shredded cabbage, greens, and low-sodium jarred mushrooms for a quick meal. Add some tofu as a protein source.



### Spruce up your sandwich

Add spinach or some thinly sliced sweet onions to your favorite sandwich or wrap for extra flavor and a little crunch.



### Go for a dip or a dunk

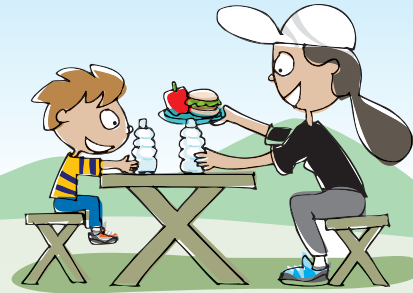
Enjoy baked potato wedges, cucumber slices, or cauliflower pieces with a homemade Italian dressing or dunked into a low-fat dip or hummus.



### Take vegetables on the go

Carry along some crunchy carrot, celery, or jicama sticks. A small container of cherry tomatoes or sugar snap peas also makes an easy snack.

# Healthy Tips for Picky Eaters



## Do any of the statements below remind you of your child?

**“Ebony will only eat peanut butter sandwiches.”**

**“Michael won’t eat anything green, just because of the color.”**

**“Bananas used to be Matt’s favorite food, but now he won’t even touch them.”**

Your child may eat only a certain type of food or refuse foods based on a certain color or texture. He or she may also play at the table and may not want to eat. Don’t worry if your child has some picky eating behaviors. Picky eating behavior is common for many children from the age of 2 to 5 years. As long as your child is growing as the doctor suggests, he or she is most likely eating enough to be healthy. If you have concerns about your child’s growth or eating behavior, talk to your child’s doctor.

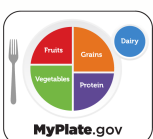
## How to cope with picky eating

Your child’s picky eating is temporary. If you don’t make it a big deal, it will usually end before school age. Try the following tips to help you deal with your child’s picky eating behavior in a positive way. Check the ones that work for you and your child.

- Let your kids be “produce pickers.”** Let them pick out fruits and veggies at the store.
- Have your child help you prepare meals.** Children learn about food and get excited about tasting food when they help make meals. Let them add ingredients, scrub veggies, or help stir food.

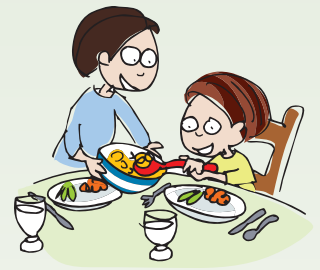


- Offer choices.** Rather than ask, “Do you want broccoli for dinner?” ask “Which would you like for dinner, broccoli or cauliflower?”
- Enjoy each other while eating family meals together.** Talk about what family members did during the day, what made you laugh, or what you did for fun. Turn off the TV and keep phones away from the table to focus on family time.
- Offer the same foods for the whole family.** Serve the same meal to adults and kids. Let them see you enjoy a variety of healthy foods. Talk about the colors, shapes, and textures on the plate.



## Trying new foods

Your child may not want to try new foods. It is normal for children to reject foods they have never tried before. Here are some tips to get your child to try new foods:



*Let your kids learn by serving themselves. Teach them to take small amounts at first. Tell your kids that they can get more food if they are still hungry.*

■ **Start with small portions.** Let your kids try small portions of new foods that you enjoy. Give them a small taste at first and be patient with them. When they develop a taste for more types of foods, it's easier to plan family meals.

■ **Offer one new food at a time.** Serve something that you know your child likes along with the new food. Offering more new foods all at once could be too much for your child.

■ **Be a good role model.** Try new foods yourself. Describe their taste, texture, and smell to your child.

■ **Offer new foods first.** Your child is most hungry at the start of a meal.

■ **Offer new foods many times.** Sometimes, new foods take time. Kids don't always take to new foods right away. It may take up to a dozen tries for a child to accept a new food.



*They learn from watching you. Eat fruits and vegetables and your child will too.*

## Make food fun!

Help your child develop healthy eating habits by getting him or her involved and making food fun! Get creative in the kitchen with these cool ideas. Check the ones you try at home, and be sure to add your own ideas, too!



*Make meals and memories together. It's a lesson they'll use for life.*

**Cut a food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.**

**Encourage your child to invent and help prepare new snacks.** Create new tastes by mixing two or more food groups together to make interesting pairings.

**Name a food your child helps create.**

Make a big deal of serving "Maria's Salad" or "Peter's Sweet Potatoes" for dinner.

**Our family ideas to make food fun:**

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**For more great tips on these and other subjects, go to:**  
**[MyPlate.gov/preschoolers](https://www.MyPlate.gov/preschoolers)**