



Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Food for Tots

Biadh dha clann bheaga

What is
a child
sized
portion?



Bread and Rice



Fruit and Vegetables



**High Fats and
Sugars**



**Meat, Fish, Eggs
and Beans**



Milk and Dairy

Helping parents and carers to make healthy choices for their toddler

Introduction

This booklet is for parents and carers of children aged between 1 and 5 years.

It includes information on healthy eating, portion sizes, snacks and drinks, good routines, play time, fussy eaters, vitamins and useful links and support.

What is a healthy diet - getting the balance right

Toddlers have different nutritional needs from adults. They are constantly on the move and are still growing rapidly so they need a diet high in energy, vitamins and minerals to sustain them.






A healthy diet is not only important for their growth but it also provides toddlers with the chance to develop hand and mouth coordination, helps speech development and helps them begin to think about sharing and taking turns.

Our ideas about food are the result of all our experiences with it: what we know, what we believe and what we like to eat. Parents have a big influence on the foods that children enjoy. Creating healthy and happy relationships with food at an early stage will have a big influence on their relationship with food as adults.

One of the best ways to help your children eat healthily is to eat well yourself so this might be the time for you to also think about making changes to your own diet.

A balanced diet

The following table shows the 5 food groups and toddlers need a variety of foods from these groups to have a healthy, balanced diet.

Food Group	Bread, rice, potatoes, cereals, pasta	Fruit and vegetables	Milk and dairy foods	Meat, fish, eggs and beans	Foods high in fat and sugar
					
What do these foods provide?	Carbohydrates for energy. Wholemeal and unrefined carbohydrates are healthier as they take longer to digest (helping keep blood sugar levels stable) and can help prevent constipation.	Vitamins and minerals for a strong immune system. Fibre for good digestion and to prevent constipation. Some carbohydrates for energy.	Calcium for strong bones and teeth. Protein for building muscle.	Protein which build and repair muscle.	This is an extra group that is not required daily. These foods are high in calories, but low in nutrients.
Which foods are in this group?	Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, cereals, oatcakes, couscous, noodles, crackers.	All fruit e.g. apple, pear, banana, melon. All veg (except potatoes) e.g. carrots, peas, turnip. Fresh, frozen and tinned all count. If buying tinned, ensure no added sugar or salt. One portion of pure fruit juice per day can be included.	Milk - full fat milk up until 2 years of age. Semi-skimmed milk can be given from age 2. Skimmed milk is not suitable for children under the age of 5. Yoghurts, cheese, fromage frais, milk puddings.	Meats, e.g. beef, pork, chicken, lamb, mince, turkey. Fish e.g. cod, haddock, tuna, salmon, mackerel, prawns. Pulses e.g. beans, lentils, chickpeas, eggs. Tofu, Quorn, Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP).	Sweets, chocolate, crisps, biscuits, sugary drinks.
Daily portions a child should eat	4	5	3	2-3	0-2. Not necessary in toddler's diet.

What is a healthy portion size?

The following pages will give guidance on what healthy portion sizes are for children.

It is not intended as a daily menu for your child, or recommendations as to what all children should be eating.

Every child is different and it is important to recognise, and respond to, signs of hunger and fullness.

Children do not need foods in the high fat and sugar group but the portion sizes are included as almost everyone gives them to children from time to time, and it is important to know what sensible portion sizes of these foods are too.

Portion sizes for 1-2 year olds

Fruit and vegetables - every meal and as snacks. Aim for 5 servings per day.

- ½ cooked sliced apple, 1 tbsp canned fruit (in juice), 1 tbsp cooked vegetables, 5 grapes (quartered), 4 cooked carrot sticks.

Bread, rice, potatoes pasta - include at every meal and some snacks.

- 1 slice of bread, 3tbsp dried cereal, 1 small boiled potato, 3tbsp cooked pasta, 2tbsp cooked rice.

Meat, fish, eggs, beans - 2 portions per day.

- 1 small slice chicken, chopped (15-25g), 1/2 -1 tbsp minced or finely chopped meat, 2 tbsp fish in sauce, 1 egg, 1 tbsp beans/ lentils.

Milk and dairy - milk as a drink, in a cup for over 1 year is included in this - 3 servings per day.

- 1 small cup of milk (200ml), 1 tbsp unsweetened yogurt, 2 small sticks of cheese, 3 tbsp custard.

High fat, high sugar foods - (0-2 portions per day).

- 4 chips, 1 small slice of cake, 1 plain biscuit, 1 tbsp ice cream.

Portion sizes for 3-5 year olds

Fruit and vegetables - every meal and as snacks, aim for 5 servings per day.

- ½ large sliced apple, 2tbsp canned fruit (in juice), 2tbsp cooked vegetables, 8 grapes (halved), 6 cooked carrot sticks.

Bread, rice, potatoes pasta - include at every meal and some snacks.

- 1 slice of bread, 5tbsp dried cereal, 2 small boiled potatoes, 4tbsp cooked pasta, 3tbsp cooked rice.

Meat, fish, eggs, beans - 2 portions per day.

- 1 small slice chicken (20-30), 1½ -2 tablespoons minced or finely chopped meat, 3tbsp fish in sauce, 1 egg, 2 tbsp beans/lentils.

Milk and dairy - milk as a drink, in a cup for over 1 year is included in this - 3 servings per day.

- 1 cup of milk (200ml), 2 tbsp unsweetened yogurt, 2 small sticks of cheese, 4 tbsp custard.




High fat, high sugar foods - (0-2 portions per day).



- 6 chips, 1 medium slice of cake, 2 plain biscuit, 2 tbsp ice cream.

How big is a portion?

An easy way to think about portion size for both children and adults is to base it on our hands.

The standard portions of milk and yogurt are written as they cannot be measured with hands.

Food group	Portions	Examples	
		1 and 2 years	3 and 4 years
Bread, rice, potatoes and pasta	4 a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice bread • 3 tbsp dry cereal • 1 small boiled potato • 3 tbsp cooked pasta • 2 tbsp cooked rice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice bread • 5 tbsp dry cereal • 2 small boiled potatoes • 4 tbsp cooked pasta • 3 tbsp cooked rice
Fruit and vegetables	5 a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cooked sliced apple • 1 tbsp canned fruit (in juice) • 1 tbsp cooked vegetables • 5 quartered grapes • 4 cooked carrot sticks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ large sliced apple • 2 tbsp canned fruit (in juice) • 2 tbsp cooked vegetables • 8 halved grapes • 6 carrot sticks
Meat, fish, eggs and beans	2-3 a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 small slice chicken • 2 tbsp fish in sauce • 1 egg • 1 tbsp beans/lentils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice chicken • 3 tbsp fish in sauce • 1 egg • 2 tbsp beans/lentils

Milk and dairy	3 a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 small cup milk (100ml) • 1 tbsp unsweetened yogurt • 2 small sticks hard cheese • 3 tbsp custard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup milk (150ml) • 2 tbsp unsweetened yogurt • 2 sticks hard cheese • 4 tbsp custard
<p style="text-align: center;">Older child and adult guide: Milk = 190ml Yoghurt = 120ml</p>			
High fat and high sugar foods	0-2 a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 chips • 1 small piece of cake • 1 plain biscuit • 1 tbsp ice cream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 chips • 1 medium piece of cake • 2 plain biscuit • 2 tbsp ice cream

Because of their small tummies and high energy needs it is recommended that children have 3 meals plus 2 snacks per day.

This means that they will not get too hungry between meals but will also learn to recognise when they are full and when they are hungry rather than allowing them to snack or “graze” constantly throughout the day.

Children instinctively know when they have had enough to eat and it is important to recognise the signs of fullness to keep mealtimes stress free.

For younger children you will be looking out for them turning their head away, or clenching their mouth shut.

1 year olds might also start to play with their food rather than eating

it and once they can talk they will tell you “all done” or “no more. It is important to listen to them rather than force feed as this will help them to regulate their appetites as they get older and may also reduce the risk of your child becoming a fussy eater.

Avoid offering snacks or lots of fluid close to mealtimes as this will reduce your child’s appetite for more nutritionally important foods.

Snack attack

You should limit foods which are high in fat, sugar or salt such as crisps, sweets, chocolates, biscuits, sugary drinks and cakes. These foods provide little nutritional value and can lead to excessive weight gain and dental decay.

Instead, offer snacks which will provide your toddler with the energy, vitamins and minerals to help them grow and stay healthy. It is important to include 2 nutritious snacks into a toddler’s diet as they are unlikely to obtain everything that they need from 3 meals per day.

Snack suggestions:

Unsalted rice cakes, breadsticks, strips of pitta bread, pancakes or chapatti, oatcakes with soft or cottage cheese, mini sandwiches, sticks of cucumber, carrot, celery or pepper with a dip such as hummus, tomato salsa or cream cheese, vegetable puff snack packs, tinned fruit in juice, fresh fruit, small sticks of hard cheese, teacake, currant bun, scone, piece of muffin or bagel, toast with mashed banana or peanut butter, milk, homemade fruit smoothie with no added sugar, plain yogurt with fruit.

What should my toddler have to drink?

It is important to offer your toddler regular drinks throughout the day to help keep them hydrated.

At this age they should be drinking from a cup or beaker, not a bottle or a non-spill feeding cup. If you are struggling to get your toddler off bottles and onto cups then you can speak to your dentist or health visitor for advice.

The best drinks to offer toddlers are milk and water, remember that full cream milk (blue lid) should be given up until the age of 2 years.

After that if he or she is eating well and growing well then they can move onto semi-skimmed milk (green lid). Skimmed milk (red lid) is NOT suitable for children under the age of 5.

Fruit juice should be very diluted (one part pure unsweetened juice to 10 parts water) and only given with a meal. Squashes should be no added sugar versions and also well diluted, there is no need for baby or toddler fruit juice or cordial. Fizzy drinks should be avoided.

Tea and coffee are not suitable for children due to both the caffeine content and the fact that this reduces the absorption of iron from foods, so these should not be offered.

Growing up milks

There are several brands of toddler milks or growing up milks available on the market. These are aimed at children from one year onwards and contain key vitamins and minerals.

However, as long as your child is eating a variety of foods and is growing and developing, these milks are not usually necessary.

Full cream milk (blue top) can be introduced from one year as long as there are no concerns about your child's development.

If you breastfeed your toddler you can keep doing so for as long as you wish.

If you are concerned about your child's diet or growth and would like to

discuss this you can get in touch with your GP or Health Visitor. You can also contact a dietitian on the number at the back of this leaflet.

Good routines and setting an example

As you have probably realised, your toddler learns from example. Anywhere you are, they want to be, and anything you are involved in, they want to do.

The same applies to introducing a healthy diet. If you set good examples then hopefully your toddler will follow.

- Have meals as a family, sitting at a table if you have one.
- Make mealtimes a sociable occasion, so turn off the TV and tablets and ignore the phone.
- Don't rush mealtimes, try to be patient - toddlers will take a while to eat their meal, and there will be mess along the way!
- Try to be positive about introducing new foods - toddlers are influenced by your reactions.
- Give praise and attention when they try new foods, and ignore any fussy behaviour.
- Let your toddler help prepare food, let them wash fruit, mix things, etc - if your toddler feels involved they are more likely to eat the finished product.
- Toddlers benefit from a daily routine and this applies to meal and snack times as well. They will not eat well if they are over tired or over hungry.
- Parents should try to eat the foods which they want their children to eat.

- Remember to look out for the signs that your child has had enough to eat and do not coax or force them to eat more than they need.
- Give your child a guided choice at meal and snack times e.g. instead of asking “what do you want for your snack?” ask “would you like an apple or a banana for your snack?”
- Don’t use food as a reward or bribe. This is something that is almost done instinctively but try to think of other family rewards such as sticker charts, pebble jars, colouring charts.

Play time

Making food fun and interesting not only encourages your toddler to start making healthier choices but it can also provide opportunities for learning about making choices, sharing and social skills to name but a few.

Try to stay calm about the mess and involve your toddler whenever possible in food shopping, preparation and tasting. Let them feel, squash, mix and explore foods in a relaxed environment.

Playing with tea sets, toy foods, play kitchens and food related games also helps to make food familiar and fun for your child.

Which foods should I limit?

Salt	<p>Intake should be kept to a minimum. Try seasoning foods with herbs and spices instead and don't add salt to food at the table.</p> <p>Processed foods can also be high in hidden salt so check the labels. The higher up the ingredient list it is the higher its salt content is. Only offer salty snacks as an occasional treat.</p>
Sugar	<p>Try not to encourage a sweet tooth. Only offer sugary foods and drinks very occasionally as a treat, and don't offer puddings as a treat for finishing their meal.</p>
Large Fish	<p>Shark, swordfish and marlin may contain high levels of mercury.</p>
Whole Nuts	<p>Should not be given to under 5s due to choking risk.</p>
Eggs and shellfish	<p>Safe if well cooked. However, can cause food poisoning if partially cooked or raw.</p>
Caffeine	<p>Found naturally in tea, coffee and added to some fizzy juice and energy drinks. Caffeine inhibits iron absorption and these drinks are not recommended.</p>

Fussy eating - tips

Throughout weaning babies are generally happy to try new foods, however you may have noticed that as a toddler they are becoming less willing to do so. This is very common and thankfully is a phase that most toddlers will grow out of fairly quickly.

Toddlers can become wary of trying new foods and it is common behaviour for them to restrict themselves to a small variety of foods with which they are familiar.

They also learn that they can have a level of control over what they do and don't eat and as this is one of the few things that young children can have; they quickly realise that refusing foods provokes a reaction from their parents.

Difficult as it is you should try to avoid reacting to this behaviour. If they refuse their food calmly take the plate away without fussing. Try to avoid the temptation to make them something else to eat as this can set you off on a habit that will last many years.

Most toddlers grow out of the fussy phase fairly quickly, particularly if their fussy behaviour does not provoke a reaction and their positive behaviour is praised.

Toddlers also learn by example, whether it is from siblings, friends or their parents. For this reason it becomes very important that parents set healthy examples by eating with their children when possible, making positive comments about foods that have been tried or eaten and frequently offering new.

You may need to offer new foods up to 15 times before they are accepted, or even for your toddler to bring it to their mouth. Perseverance is key!

Never force feed or encourage them to eat more than they want, this will create a stressful environment surrounding mealtimes and the more anxious and stressed you and your toddler are, the less likely it is that they will try something new.

- Praise positive eating behaviours.
- Offer two courses at meals, one savoury one sweet. However, don't give the sweet as a reward for eating the savoury.

- Eat in a calm, relaxed environment without distractions.
- Take away uneaten food without comment or fuss.
- Do not offer snacks or large drinks of milk, water, etc just before a meal.
- Involve your toddler with shopping and simple food preparation.
- Do not offer alternatives for a refused meal.
- Eat as a family, and set a good example by eating foods which you would like them to try.
- Stay as calm as possible.
- For some children reward systems can help.
- If feeding becomes a problem or if you are concerned about your child's growth, you can contact the Department of Nutrition & Dietetics to make a self referral.

Vitamins

We are unlikely to meet our vitamin D requirement without taking a supplement. Even people with a perfect diet will not be getting enough, as most of the vitamin D we get is from the sunshine. We do not get enough sun exposure to ensure we have sufficient levels of vitamin D stored in our bodies. Vitamin D is important for bone health and there are links between a lack of vitamin D and other diseases.



All children in the Western Isles under the age of 5 can get Healthy Start vitamins free of charge. These can be collected from a range of places - GP surgeries, health visitors, HIRS at the Stornoway Health Centre, or the dietitian. Healthy Start vitamin drops contain vitamins A, C and D and should be given daily.

Why are these vitamins needed?

Vitamin A is needed for healthy growth and skin and is also good for

iron absorption and can help fight infection.

The Healthy Start vitamins are banana flavoured drops, they can be given as they are or added into a drink or yogurt.

Sources of Information

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's diet or growth you can contact your GP or Health Visitor.

You can also self refer to the Dietitian, based at the Western Isles Hospital.

Useful websites

Ready Steady Toddler	www.readysteadytoddler.co.uk
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Western Isles Parenting	www.parentingwi.scot.nhs.uk
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Little people's plates on the Infant and Toddler Forum	www.infantandtoddlerforum.org
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Notes

Further Information

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NHS Western Isles Dietitians



NHSWI Dietitians (@NHSWI_Diet)

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide.
If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback or share your story at:
www.careopinion.org.uk or 0800 122 31 35
- Tel. 01851 704704 (ext 2408) on a Tuesday and Friday afternoon between 1pm and 4pm.

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