

# 12-15 MONTHS

Your toddler from twelve to fifteen months  
Supporting your family during your child's second year



**12-15  
MONTHS**





## YOUR TODDLER AT 12 - 15 MONTHS

Healthy eating and active play are important for your toddler.

This booklet provides information on your toddler's health and tips for parents' health too.

### RECOMMENDATIONS



#### Nutrition

- Continue breastfeeding up to 2 years and beyond
- Use a cup instead of a bottle – stop all bottles at this age
- Drinks can include:
  - water
  - full fat cow's milk
  - soy or calcium enriched rice and oat milk can be used under health professional supervision
- Toddlers need a wide variety of healthy foods every day



#### Active play

- **Encourage free movement:** At least 3 hours spent in a variety of physical activities throughout the day
- **Limit inactivity:** Children aged 0 – 5 years should not be inactive for longer than an hour at a time, unless they are sleeping
- **No screen time:** Children under 2 years should have no screen time including no TV, DVDs, using computers, iPads, tablets, smart phone or any other electronic devices
- **Sleep:** 11 – 14 hours of good quality sleep, including naps, with consistent sleep and wake up times



#### Immunisation

- At 12 months your toddler is due for immunisations to protect against meningococcal C, measles, mumps and rubella
- Other immunisations are available - please discuss with your GP
- Your toddler is due for their 12 month developmental Personal Health Record (Blue Book) check. Contact your Child and Family Health Nurse or GP

# FEEDING YOUR TODDLER



## SOLIDS AND MILK FEEDING

Now that your child is 12 – 15 months old, solid foods are their main source of nutrition. They should be eating about 3 small meals a day and healthy snacks in between.

### Continue breastfeeding

Breastfeeding for 12 months or longer, can benefit your health and your toddler's health. Breastfeeding will continue to provide many health benefits even though there may be fewer breastfeeds, including:

- strengthening their immune system
- helping their brain development
- strengthening their bones and teeth
- strengthening the bond between you and your child
- reducing their risk of obesity

#### ○ When to breastfeed:

Offer a breastfeed an hour after offering your toddler their meals. It is important not to offer breastfeeds every time your toddler demands, as frequent breastfeeding can interfere with their intake of solids.

#### ○ No more night feeds:

Your toddler no longer needs an overnight feed. If they are still waking and demanding one or more feeds overnight and this is interfering with their solid intake or is problematic for your family, please contact your Child and Family Health Nurse.

#### ○ Breastfeeding and work:

If you have returned to paid work or study and need to be separated from your toddler, you can breastfeed around these hours (e.g. morning and evening). You may have a plan of how long you would like to breastfeed or you may be guided by your toddler's desire to continue breastfeeding until they self-wean.

#### ○ Weaning from breastfeeding:

If you are considering weaning your toddler from the breast, it is best to do this slowly so your toddler and your breasts can adjust comfortably. Please contact your Child and Family Health Nurse or visit the Australian Breastfeeding Association website for support <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/bfinfo/weaning.html>.



## CUP DRINKING

From 12 months, the only drinks toddlers need are breastmilk, water or pasteurised, full fat cow's milk (or suitable cow's milk alternative).

- Toddlers do not need:
  - formula milk
  - specialised toddler milks or toddler drinks
  - flavoured milk or flavoured water
  - fruit juice
  - soft drinks
  - other sweetened drinks

It is now important that you offer drinks from a cup. After 12 months, offer a cup instead of a bottle. Stopping all bottles and drinking from a cup only can help to reduce the chance of ear infections and tooth decay.

Clean your toddler's teeth twice a day, after mealtimes, with a small soft toothbrush designed for children under 2 years. Use only water on the toothbrush until they are 18 months old.

---

## FAMILY FOODS

By 12 months children should enjoy eating healthy meals with the rest of the family. Family meals are a great way for your toddler to learn healthy eating habits from you by eating a variety of foods from all the food groups.







## WHAT TO FEED AND HOW MUCH FOOD?

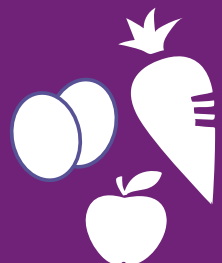
Children do not grow as quickly in their second year, so their appetite may not be as big. Children also have small stomachs - about the size of their fist so serving sizes need to be smaller. If they're still hungry they'll ask for more.

The following is a guide for the serving sizes your toddler can have throughout a day, but remember, children eat different amounts on different days depending on their activity level. So it is important that you offer them a variety of healthy foods and let them decide whether to eat it and how much.



## DAILY DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR TODDLERS AT 12 – 24 MONTHS

FOOD GROUP	SERVES	SAMPLE SERVE
<b>Vegetables</b> 	2 – 3	1/2 cup cooked vegetables 1 cup leafy salad 1/2 medium potato 1/2 cup cooked or canned beans or lentils
<b>Fruit</b> 	1/4	2 small fruits, apricots, kiwi fruit or plum 1 medium banana, apple, pear, orange 1/2 cup diced fruit
<b>Grains (wholegrain)</b> 	4	1 slice of bread 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta, noodles, quinoa or polenta 1/4 cup muesli 1 crumpet or English muffin
<b>Meat or alternatives</b> 	1	65g cooked lean beef, lamb, veal 80g cooked lean chicken or turkey 100g cooked fish fillet 2 large eggs 170 g cooked tofu 1 cup cooked lentils, chickpeas or canned beans 1 1/2 tablespoons nut pastes and spreads
<b>Dairy foods (full fat dairy)</b> 	1 – 1 1/2	1 cup (250 ml) milk or calcium fortified non-dairy (e.g. soy or rice) 2 slices of cheese 3/4 cup yoghurt
<b>Healthy fats</b> 	Use in small amounts	1 tablespoon of nut butter 1/4 avocado





## FUSSY EATING

Toddlers are still exploring different foods and learning independence, so it is normal for them to be fussy eaters and not like particular flavours and textures of some foods. You may see changes in the foods they enjoy eating and how much they eat from day to day. If your toddler is healthy and has enough energy to play then they are most likely eating enough.

### Where to seek help if your toddler is not eating well

- Check out the 6 – 8 month Healthy Beginnings booklet and the Fuss Free Mealtimes resource for more information <http://www.slhd.nsw.gov.au/PopulationHealth/HealthyChildren.html>
- If your toddler eats very little, does not eat specific food groups or you are concerned about their growth and development, contact your Child and Family Health Nurse, an Accredited Practising Dietitian or your GP.

## MESSY MEALS

Allowing your toddler to feed themselves is the perfect way for them to learn and enjoy eating, but it might mean that there will be a lot of mess. Mess is very normal and can be stressful - but with more practice they will improve and mealtimes will be less messy.

### How to deal with messy eating

- Give them strips of soft foods that they can hold in their hand (e.g. boiled vegetables, fruit, sandwiches, cheese, meat)
- At mealtimes you can use material to make it easier to clean the mess (e.g. place newspaper or a plastic sheet underneath their high chair, a mat if they are sitting on the floor, a bib to cover their clothes)
- Praise their behaviour when they haven't made a mess (e.g. "I like the way you are eating your carrot stick")

## FOOD ALLERGIES AND FOOD INTOLERANCES

Food allergies and intolerances are quite common in children but severe allergic reactions are uncommon. Unless you have been told by a dietitian or an appropriate health professional, there are no particular foods that you need to avoid giving your toddler.

### Common signs for food allergies or intolerances

#### Allergies

The symptoms of immediate food allergies usually happen within a few seconds to minutes but can appear up to 2 hours after eating. Skin reactions (hives or eczema), vomiting, diarrhoea, swollen lips, tongue or face, and anaphylaxis are the common symptoms.

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction. Symptoms can include:

- difficulty breathing
- tightness in throat
- wheeze or persistent cough
- pale and floppy

Anaphylaxis is potentially life threatening and needs urgent medical attention.

**CALL AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY - PHONE 000**

## Food intolerances

The symptoms can appear up to 2 days after eating a particular food.

Symptoms can include:

- bloating
- diarrhoea
- stomach pain

It is important to always check the ingredients on food labels and when eating out to make sure it is safe for your toddler to eat the product.

## OTHER CARERS

When your toddler is cared for by someone other than you or your partner, it can be hard to monitor and manage the amount and the types of food they are given.

To make sure that your toddler is getting the best nutrition their body needs to develop, you can try the following:

- encourage the carer to provide a variety of healthy food options and share some ideas
- prepare your own lunch box with healthy meals and snacks to give to the carer for your toddler to eat
- talk to your carer about your toddler's hunger and fullness signs so they know what to look out for
- share tips about how you usually feed your toddler
- if your toddler attends childcare, ask about the menu offered and how much and what your toddler eats when they are there
- discuss with the carer why it is important to avoid giving toddlers unhealthy foods which may cause tooth decay and unhealthy weight gain

When grandparents, other family members or friends are caring for your toddler this can be particularly tricky to manage. If it is becoming problematic, please contact your Child and Family Health Nurse for some ideas to manage this situation.





## YOUR TODDLER'S PLAY

Play is really important for a toddler as this is how children learn, develop new skills, gain muscle strength and grow in confidence in their own skills.

Toddlers need to be active for at least 3 hours throughout the day.

They need to participate in both active and quiet play. Toddlers are able and want to be active, spend time outside the home, play at the park, in the garden or at the beach. This will be an exciting and enjoyable experience for children. It will also let them explore nature, have new experiences and gain new physical skills.



**Active play:** walking, jumping, running, dancing, climbing, blowing bubbles, chasing, throwing, kicking and chasing balls, playing with sand or water, pushing and pulling toys/trolleys and jumping in puddles



**Quiet play:** reading, blocks, jigsaws and puzzles

### Things to remember:

Children should not be inactive for longer than 1 hour unless they are asleep

Children under 2 years should not have any screen time - no TV, DVDs, computers, iPad/tablets, smart phones or any other electronic devices

This is an important age to interact and talk with your toddler, as it helps with their language skills and mental health development

Toddlers love to socialise - join playgroups or join in Rhyme Time at your local Library. This will help you meet other parents with toddlers who live in your area

Be playful. Play silly games, let your toddler climb all over you, play peek-a-boo, roll on the floor, blow bubbles, play with play dough. Have fun together! This is a great way to really connect with your toddler and build a positive relationship

Always make sure your child is being supervised by an adult as they are still gaining skills but do not yet know their limits. They need your help to stay safe when playing - indoors and outdoors including when playing with any water to prevent drowning





## YOUR TODDLER'S SLEEP

From 12 months, toddlers need a total of 11 – 14 hours of sleep. It is normal to expect 10 – 12 hours of sleep at night and 1 – 2 hours during the day.

Most toddlers can now sleep throughout the night but it is common for them to wake up 1 – 2 times. Sleep problems are common for children. Separation anxiety, night time fears, night terrors or nightmares can be an issue for children of this age. Please contact your Child and Family Health Nurse if your toddler is waking several times a night and you are finding it hard to cope with.

A good bedtime routine can help to calm your toddler so they are ready to sleep. It also helps to develop good sleeping habits.

### A good example of a bedtime routine might include:

**6:00pm**

After a bath, put them in their pyjamas, last breastfeed, brush teeth and change their nappy

**6:30pm**

Quiet time (e.g. read a book, sing a lullaby or tell a story)

**7:00pm**

Good night kiss and cuddle. Place into bed, wish them a good night



# LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

The Healthy Beginnings booklets have provided you with lots of information and tips on why it is important to look after your physical health and emotional wellbeing.

## Keeping up with your physical activity:

- Now that your toddler is becoming more physically active it is a great time to increase your physical activity too. Spend some time at the park and play chasing or games with a ball as a family
- Incidental activity is also a great way to increase your physical activity. Examples include:
  - o walking instead of driving to the shops or childcare
  - o encourage your toddler to get out of the pram and walk with you. Movement is important for their health and wellbeing too
  - o walking up the stairs instead of taking the lift or escalators
  - o do some gardening, housework or dance around the house with your toddler
  - o go for a short walk before breakfast or after dinner

## Managing your healthy eating:

- Prepare food on the weekend
- Explore online food shopping/home delivery services
- Ask for and accept help with preparing food from family or friends
- Make a list of ingredients at home before going to the supermarket
- Frozen, canned or pre-cut vegetables are great time savers

## Managing your emotional wellbeing:

Parenting a toddler can be exhausting and challenging. It is important to take care of your emotional wellbeing. Check out the Healthy Beginnings booklets for ideas on how to look after your mental health and emotional wellbeing.

If you are not enjoying your usual activities, feeling overwhelmed or experiencing a persistent low mood, talk to your Child and Family Health Nurse, GP or one of the services below.



## Services available

Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia (PANDA)	1300 726 306
beyondblue	1300 224 636
Pregnancy, Birth & Baby	1800 882 436

# WHAT TO CONSIDER FOR YOUR TODDLER'S HEALTH AT 12 - 24 MONTHS



Keep me healthy, give me fruit and vegetables every day



Water in a cup is best for me and my teeth



Keep me active, I don't need screen time for play



I'm a toddler now, not a baby, I can sleep at night without any milk



Reward me with cuddles and praise, food rewards are unhelpful for me





## CONTACT



**Healthy Beginnings**  
[www.healthybeginnings.net.au](http://www.healthybeginnings.net.au)



**Health Direct Australia**  
[www.healthdirect.org.au](http://www.healthdirect.org.au)

**Acknowledgements:** The Healthy Beginnings program was funded by the NSW Health Translational Research Grant Scheme 2016 (ID number: TRGS 200) and NHMRC Partnership Project 2019 (#APPI169823). We sincerely thank participating partners of the project from the Sydney, South Eastern Sydney, South Western Sydney and Southern NSW Local Health Districts, and members of the advisory committee and project management team. This resource was part of the Healthy Beginnings program developed by SLHD Population Health and Community Health Services. The information for this resource was obtained from NSW Health sources, National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Breastfeeding Association and Raising Children Network. The information in this resource is for general guidance only and should not be a substitute for professional advice



UPDATED APRIL 2021