

Toddler Nutrition: How Much is Enough?

What is a Serving Size for a Toddler?

Is your child's stomach as big as yours? Children are much smaller than adults so it is important to remember that we should feed them smaller portions as well as more frequent meals than those of adults since a smaller stomach will fill up faster. An appropriate serving size for a toddler is going to be about 1/4 to 1/2 of an adult serving as recommended by MyPyramid. For example, a serving of bread for a small child would be 1/4 of a slice for a 1-year-old, and 1/2 of a slice for a 3-year-old.

Another way to quickly estimate serving sizes for children is 1 tablespoon per year. For example, a 2-year-old would be served 2 tablespoons of fruits or vegetables, and a 4-year-old would get 4 tablespoons or 1/4 cup.

Foods Toddlers Need

Most 2- to 3-year-old children need to consume about 1,000 calories per day of nutrient-rich foods. Here's how to distribute those calories in a healthy eating plan:

Food Group	Servings per Day	Example: Foods in this Group	One Serving (1 -2 years)	One Serving (3 – 6 years)
Fruits	2-3	Cooked or canned fruit, Fresh fruit, Fruit Juice	1/4 cups, 1/2 medium, 2-4 cups	1/4 to 1/2 to 1 medium, 4 ounces
Vegetables	2-3	Raw or cooked vegetables	1 tablespoon/each year of age	1 tablespoon / each year of age
Grains	3 ounces (at least 1.5 ounces should be whole grains)	Bread, cooked cereal, rice, pasta, dry cereal, crackers	1/4 to 1/2 slice, 1/4 to 1/2 cup, 1/4 to 1/3 cup, 1-2 each	1/2 -1 slice, 1/3 to 1/2 cup, 1/3 to 1/2 cup, 2-4 each
Protein (lean meats/beans)	2 ounces	Lean meat, fish, poultry, tofu, eggs, peanut butter, cooked or dried beans, peas, lentils	1 ounce or 2 TB (ground meat), 1.2 white + yolk, 1 tablespoon, 1/4 cup	1-2 ounces, 1-2 tablespoons, 1/3 to 1/2 cup
Milk /diary *	2 cups	Milk	1/2 cup, 1/2 ounce 1/3 cup	3/4 to 1/2 cup, 1/2 to 1 ounce, 1/2 cup



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2% or whole milk is recommended for children younger than 2 for the dietary fats needed for normal growth and development. Options such as fat-free and 1% milk, as well as low-fat yogurt and cheese are an appropriate choice for those older than 2 years of age to maintain healthy bones and teeth, without the added fat (consult your physician first before switching).

Frozen Ban-ola: Makes 1 ban-ola

Ingredients:

1 medium sized banana – peeled
1/2 cup crushed granola plain or vanilla yogurt

Directions:

1. Dip banana in your choice of yogurt
2. Roll banana in crushed granola
3. Place in freezer bag and freeze

(May also be eaten unfrozen)

Strawberry Smoothie: Makes 1 smoothie

Ingredients:

2 ice cubes
1/3 cup low-fat cottage cheese

2/3 cup frozen strawberries
1 1/2 tsp sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
Blender

Directions:

1. Pour all ingredients into the blender
2. Blend until smooth for 45-60 seconds
3. Pour into a glass and enjoy!

Tips for Raising Healthy Toddlers:

- Be a healthy role model-You can be a good role model by eating regular balanced meals filled with nutrient-rich foods.
- Establish routines around mealtimes and snacks- sit down at the table and enjoy family meal time. Offer finger foods until utensils can be manipulated.
- Try new foods-It may take up to 10-15 times of offering a food before it will be accepted by a child. Add just one new food with other familiar foods your child already enjoys instead of many new foods all at once.
- Allow your child to tell you when they are full and finished eating. They will naturally regulate the amount they eat so do not force them to finish what is on the plate.
- It is the parents' role to determine WHAT and WHEN foods are served. It is the child's role to decide WHICH and HOW MUCH of the healthy foods offered he/she will eat.



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- Regularly scheduled snacks are important because they provide children with the nutrients and calories they will need each day. More active kids may need these snacks for energy during play.
- Healthy eating should be paired with healthy physical activity- children should be active at play for at least 1-2 hours each day, including activities such as trips to the park, organized classes, or age-appropriate sports.

Toddlers and juice

Letting children carry around juice all day oftentimes results in diarrhea in some and can even contribute to weight gain in others. Even 100% fruit juice contains about the same amount of calories and sugar as soda pop. A good guideline is to limit your toddler's juice intake to no more than 4 oz. per day, and offer options such as water and milk when children are thirsty. Also, offer fruit rather than juice, because whole fruits contain important vitamins and fiber.



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