

# 12–24 months

## Parent Tips

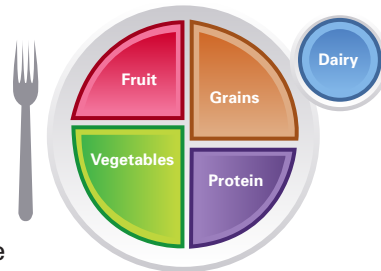
- Eat as a family. If you eat new, colorful and healthy foods, your toddler will, too.
- At mealtimes, use small plates, spoons and forks.
- Let them serve themselves and choose how much to eat. Expect them to be messy.
- Gagging and funny faces can be normal when you offer new textures and tastes. Expect to offer a new food 10 to 12 times before they will accept it.
- Expect picky eating, but do not offer replacements. Don't worry if they don't eat that much. They will eat more at the next meal or the next day.
- Don't use food as a comfort or reward. Limit sweets, desserts and candy.



## Feeding Advice

### Self-feeding table food:\*

- At each meal, serve vegetables first, when your toddler is most hungry.
- Half of the plate will be fruits and vegetables. The other half will be protein foods, such as fish, eggs, beans or meats, and whole grains, such as whole wheat bread and brown rice.
- If your toddler is hungry between meals, offer fruits and vegetables.



- Water is best if your toddler is thirsty between meals. Juice is not necessary. If your doctor recommends it, give no more than 4 to 6 ounces a day of 100% juice.
- Sweetened beverages such as soft drinks, sports drinks, and fruit punches are not good for your toddler.

## Be Active

- Your toddler is naturally active. They like walking, climbing and more. It is best for toddlers not to sit for more than 30 minutes.
- Play with your toddler each day.
- Limit activities with screens (TV, computers, tablets, video games and cell phones) so your toddler is more active.

## Sleep Advice

- Enjoy a calming sleep routine with low lights, a warm bath, and **reading** together.
- No food or screens before bed.
- It is normal and best for toddlers at this age to sleep around 12 to 14 hours each day.

### What should my toddler be drinking?

- If you are breastfeeding, continue to do so.
- Your toddler should be drinking from a cup.
- Offer milk in a cup at meals. Talk to your healthcare provider or dietitian about choices if your toddler cannot drink cow's milk.

\*Beware of choking hazards (ask your healthcare provider).

## Play with a Purpose: 12–24 months

**This is a big year!** From 12 to 24 months, your toddler will get good at walking, talking and feeding themselves. They also will learn to eat whatever your family eats.

### Have You Noticed?

- Your toddler asks for the same foods over and over. This is normal. Your job is to offer a wide variety of foods.
- Your toddler is starting to imitate the things that you do.

### Watching Your Child

- Every 12 to 24 month old toddler has temper tantrums. “No” is a big word. Try to learn what they want and say the words for them.
- When your toddler has a meltdown, don’t react. Turn away for a few seconds. When they calm down, give them lots of attention.
- Talk quietly and listen to them, even if its babble. Use words to help them.

### Fun at Mealtime

- **Meal times should be fun and messy.**
- At least one time a day, sit down and eat together.
- Share what you’re eating. Name things, say the colors and count.
- **Watch how they learn about food by playing.**



### Play with a Purpose

Every day set aside some time to play with your toddler down at their level:

- **Talk** – Babbling is talking. Talk back and forth and smile.
- **Big muscles** (legs, back, arms) – At first, help them balance to pull up, walk and climb. Play games that make them run, jump, throw, kick and climb.
- **Hands and fingers** – Stack blocks or plastic cups, color, paint or use chalk; toss a soft ball, pull strings, and push toys.

### Try This!

- Offer 2 good choices for meals or snacks, but let them pick (apples or pears, peas or carrots).
- It’s fun to mix breakfast, lunch and dinner foods, like eggs for dinner.
- Give small portions until you see how hungry they are. They’ll ask if they want more.

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