

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

NUTRITION IN THE EARLY YEARS



MARCH 2023

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY NUTRITION

Children from 1-4 years old are always on the move and need a variety of foods in order to:

- establish good eating patterns
- ensure they grow and develop appropriately
- protect their teeth
- ensure they arrive in school at a healthy body weight able to enjoy a variety of minimally processed foods.



FOOD GROUPS

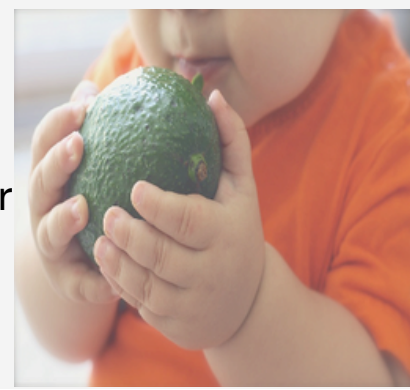
To help make this task a little easier, the main foods in our diet can be divided into food groups. The recommended portion sizes of each food group are outlined below (ranges for variable appetites and increasing age)

- **Wholegrains**
- **Fruit and Vegetables**
- **Dairy Foods**
- **Protein Foods**

Evidence has shown good nutrition in early years can positively influence

- concentration
- physical and cognitive development
- learning outcomes
- long term health

By offering a range of different foods over the course of the week, your child is likely to get the nutrition they need.



PORTION SIZES



WHOLEGRAIN FOODS

1-2 years	3-4 servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High carbohydrate foods provide a key energy and fibre source for your child • Include at least one serving at every mealtime. • Very high fibre diets are not recommended for young children as they can be too filling -mix white and wholemeal/wholegrain options. • look for iron fortified cereals (12mg/100g)
3-4 years	4 to 6+servings	
example of serving	1/2-1 slice of bread, 1-1/2 wheat biscuit cereal, 3-6 tbsp cereal, 2-5 tbsp cooked pasta, 2-5 tbsp boiled rice	

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

1-2 years	2 to 3 servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit and vegetables are excellent sources of fibre, vitamins and minerals. They also provide a variety of tastes and textures. • Offer fresh colourful vegetables, salads or fruits chopped into small servings at every meal, and as snacks. • Orange juice is rich in vitamin C. When your child drinks unsweetened orange juice and eats an iron-containing breakfast cereal, it helps them absorb iron* • Try to give a variety of colours <p>*more information in Iron leaflet</p>
3-4 years	4 to 5 servings	
example of serving	1 piece of fresh fruit e.g. pear, banana, apple, orange, handful of berries 3-4 carrot/cucumber sticks 100ml unsweetened orange juice.	

PORTION SIZES



DAIRY FOODS

1-4 years	3 servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cheese, milk and yoghurt can be used in cooking without affecting the calcium content.• While milk is an important part of a child's diet the amount consumed should not exceed one pint a day as large quantities of milk are linked with poor dietary habits and can reduce appetite.• For dairy free alternatives ensure you chose unsweetened fortified options (I will go into more details on this in a separate document)
example of serving	1 glass of milk (200ml), 125g plain yogurt, 15g cheese	

PROTEIN FOODS

1-2 years	2 servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meat, fish, poultry and eggs are good sources of protein which is essential for growth and development. Pulses (peas, beans, lentils) also provide protein.• Children's appetites vary, offer smaller portions to younger children. They can decide on their own appetite so don't force them to clear their plates• offer oily fish once/week (this includes tinned fish-avoiding ones in brine or salt)
3-4 years	3 to 4 servings	
example of serving	30-45g cooked beef/lamb/chicken/salmon, 1 egg, 40g beans, 35g hummus	

Tips

LIMIT

- high sugar foods
- processed foods
- high salt and fat

INCLUDE

- Good calcium sources
- Iron rich foods
- Variety
- Fruit & vegetables in meals and snacks

Toddlers all have different appetites

Follow your child's cues and try to avoid pressuring to eat more

Toddlers are very good at knowing when they are full

Toddlers own appetites will vary day to day and between meals

Child-sized portions

	plate	bowl
Child	20cm	11cm
adult	26cm	16cm

Keep them active