

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, composed of several overlapping, colored bars that taper from left to right and then extend horizontally. The colors include dark blue, yellow, teal, purple, light blue, and magenta.

Health Visiting Service

**Healthy eating advice for parents and
carers of children aged one to four years**

Introduction

The Health Visiting Service works with parents and carers of children aged one to four. We give advice on healthy food and drink.

Some children like their food to be separated on a plate, while others are happy with their food mixed together.

Some children eat nearly everything they are given, while others are much pickier. Do not force your child to eat food they do not want to eat.

After your child's first birthday they may:

- Pick the food they want to eat based on its taste, feel, look or even the colour
- Like to feed themselves
- Show sudden changes in what they food like
- Refuse to try new foods – this usually changes as toddlers get closer to school age.

Helpful advice

- Eat together as a family and make meal times calm and happy times.
- Eat family friendly foods.
- Make foods that are fun – finger foods are good.
- Let your child explore food to get used to new textures.
- Offer foods from all five food groups to give your toddler a mixture.
- Let your child decide how much they want to eat.
- Never make your child eat everything on their plate.
- Never give food or drink as a reward, treat or comfort.
- Try to avoid watching television or using your phone at meal times.

Remember, it takes time for toddlers to like new foods.

How often should I feed my child?

You should offer your child three meals and two/three healthy snacks each day such as fruit and wholemeal toast

How many drinks should I give to my child?

If you are breastfeeding continue to do so.

Give all drinks in a beaker or free-flow cup – not in a bottle. 3 to 4oz or 100mL is about right.

Remember, water is the best choice.

What about vitamins?

All babies from six months until five years should be given Healthy Start vitamins. This is to help make sure they are getting enough vitamins A, C and D.

What about physical activity?

A child should have at least three hours of physical activity every day. Walking, running, and dancing can be done inside or outside.

Only let your child watch the television or have screen-time, such as using a computer, for one hour a day.

What snacks can I give my child?

If your child is hungry in-between meals, try giving them a healthy snack.

Try not to give snacks that are high in fat, sugar or salt in-between meals. They are not good for your child's health or their teeth. These foods include:

- Chocolate
- Sweets
- Crisps
- Cakes
- Ice cream
- Biscuits.

What snacks should I not give to my child?

Whole nuts **must not** be given to children under five; they can get stuck if they are swallowed. You should **not give** your child:

- Sweetened fruit squashes
- Fizzy drinks
- Tea and coffee
- Full-strength fruit juices – only give water

The five food groups

1. Carbohydrates – these include bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and cereals.
2. Fruit and vegetables.
3. Dairy – these include milk, cheese, and yoghurt.
4. Protein – these include meat, fish, eggs and nuts.
5. Foods and drinks high in fat and sugar.



Toddler sizes of carbohydrates

Offer carbohydrates to your child at each meal and occasionally as snacks.

- ½ to 1 slice wholegrain or white bread or a ¼ to ¾ bread roll.
- 3 to 6 tablespoons of wholegrain or breakfast cereal with added vitamins, but without a sugar coating. There is no need to add extra sugar - make them sweeter by adding dried or fresh fruit.
- 5 to 8 tablespoons of warm cereal such as porridge made up with milk.
- 2 to 5 tablespoons of rice or pasta.
- ½ to 1½ egg sized potatoes or 1 to 4 tablespoons of mashed potato.
- ½ to 2 crispbreads or 1 to 3 crackers.

Toddler sizes of fruit and vegetables

Offer your child fruit and vegetables at each meal and at snack time. They can be fresh, frozen, or canned fruit/vegetables.

- ¼ to ½ medium apple, orange, ¼ to ¾ pear or ¼ to 1 medium banana.
- 3 to 10 small berries or grapes (cut into quarters).
- 2 to 4 tablespoons of raw, freshly cooked, stewed, or mashed fruit.
- 1 to 3 tablespoons of raw or cooked vegetables.

Toddler sizes of dairy

Give whole milk rather than lower fat milks from 12 months until at least two years of age. After two years they can have semi-skimmed milk.

Give your child three toddler sizes each day:

- 3 to 4oz (100 – 120mL) whole cows' milk as a drink in a cup (15oz or 300mL in a day). This could be included in other dairy foods
- 1 small pot (125mL yoghurt or 2 x 60g pots of yoghurt) or 2 to 4 tablespoons of grated cheese
- Cheese in a sandwich or on a piece of pizza. 5 to 7 tablespoons of custard or 4 to 6 tablespoons of milk pudding.

Toddler sizes of protein

Give your child two or three toddler sizes each day:

- 2 to 4 tablespoons of ground, chopped or cubed lean meats, fish or poultry
- ½ to 1 whole boiled egg
- 2 to 4 tablespoons of whole pulses (beans, lentils, dahl) or 1 to 2 tablespoons of houmous
- ½ to 1 tablespoons of smooth peanut butter or 1 to 2 tablespoons of ground or chopped nuts.

Toddler sizes of foods and drinks high in fat and sugar

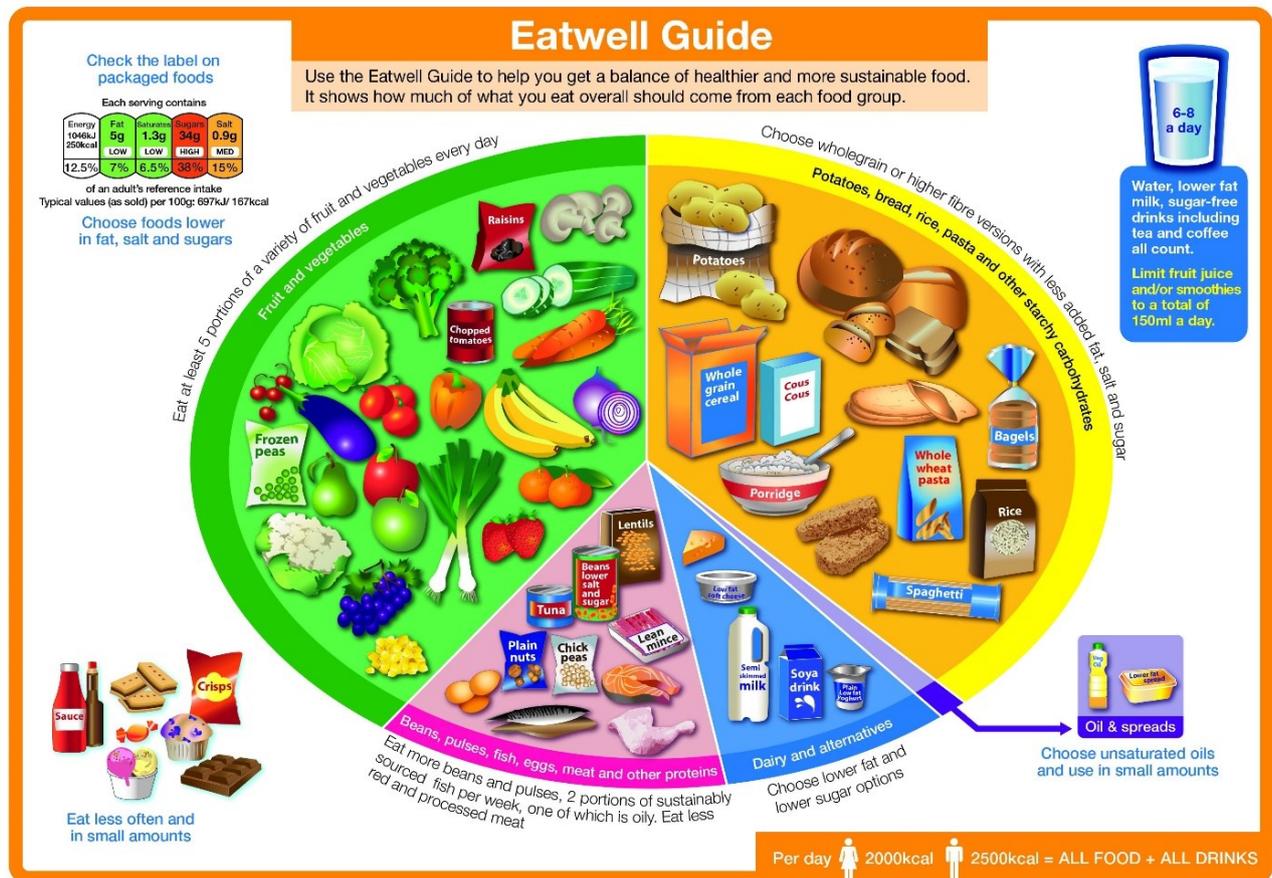
Keep sugary drinks and foods to mealtimes. This will help to keep your child's teeth healthy.

Only give your child small amounts of foods/drinks high in fat and sugar such as:

- ½ to 1 digestive biscuit or 1 to 2 small biscuits
- 1 tablespoon of butter/oil or 1 to 2 tablespoons of mayonnaise
- 4 to 6 crisps
- Sweetened milk shakes.

The Eatwell Guide

The average size plate for a one- to four-year-old is 20cm.



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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Three menu ideas:

One

Breakfast	Porridge with milk, satsuma, milk
Mid-morning snack	Banana, rice cakes, water
Lunch	Lentil soup with toast fingers, carrot cake, water
Mid-afternoon snack	Bread sticks, cheese, and cherry tomatoes (cut into quarters), water
Tea/dinner	Beef mince and vegetables with mashed potatoes, jelly with fruit and dairy ice-cream, water
Evening drink	Milk.

Two

Breakfast	Wholemeal cereal with milk and raisins or apricots, milk
Mid-morning snack	Plain pancake with yoghurt and sliced pear, water
Lunch	Mushroom omelette, carrot sticks (raw or lightly cooked), rice pudding, water
Mid-afternoon snack	Crackers with houmous, sliced apple, water
Tea/dinner	Tuna, bean, broccoli and sweetcorn pasta, fresh fruit, water
Evening drink	Milk.

Three

Breakfast	Toast with banana, milk
Mid-morning snack	Pitta bread, cucumber/pepper sticks, water
Lunch	Baked beans on a jacket potato, plain yoghurt with strawberries, water
Mid-afternoon snack	Oatcake with cottage cheese, grapes (cut into quarters), water
Tea/dinner	Chicken/chickpea and vegetable curry with rice, stewed apples and raisins with custard, water
Evening drink	Water.

Health visiting teams in your area

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For impartial and confidential advice or information on the services provided by Bridgewater or to receive this leaflet in an alternative format call our Patient Services team on 0800 587 0562.

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