Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Healthy eating advice – children aged one to four

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Parent and Carer Information

0-19s Universal Services

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Introduction

The Health Visiting Service support parents and carers to promote healthy eating for growth and development of children aged one to four.

Helpful advice

- Eat together as a family and make mealtimes relaxed, happy occasions.
- Eat family foods
- Make foods that are fun – finger foods are good
- Let your child explore food to adapt to new textures
- Offer foods from all five food groups to give your toddler the right mix of nutrients
- Let your toddler decide how much they want to eat
- Never insist your toddler eats everything on their plate
- Never give food or drink as a reward, treat or comfort
- Minimise distractions, i.e., television, tablets, phones, laptops

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

Your child’s taste and preferences

Some children like foods to be separated on a plate whilst others are happy with foods mixed together.

Some children eat almost everything while others are much fussier.

Respect your toddler's taste and preferences – do not force feed. After your child's first birthday they may:

- Show some food preferences – this might be for different textures, tastes and colours
- Like to feed themselves and be more independent
- Show sudden changes in food likes and dislikes
- Refuse to try new foods – this usually decreases as toddlers approach school age

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.

Do not allow your child to graze on food.

What about drinks?

- If you are breastfeeding, continue to do so
- Give all drinks in a beaker or free-flow cup – not bottles
- 3 - 4oz or 100 - 200ml is about right. Remember, water is the best choice.

Should I give my child vitamins?

Healthy start vitamins are advised.

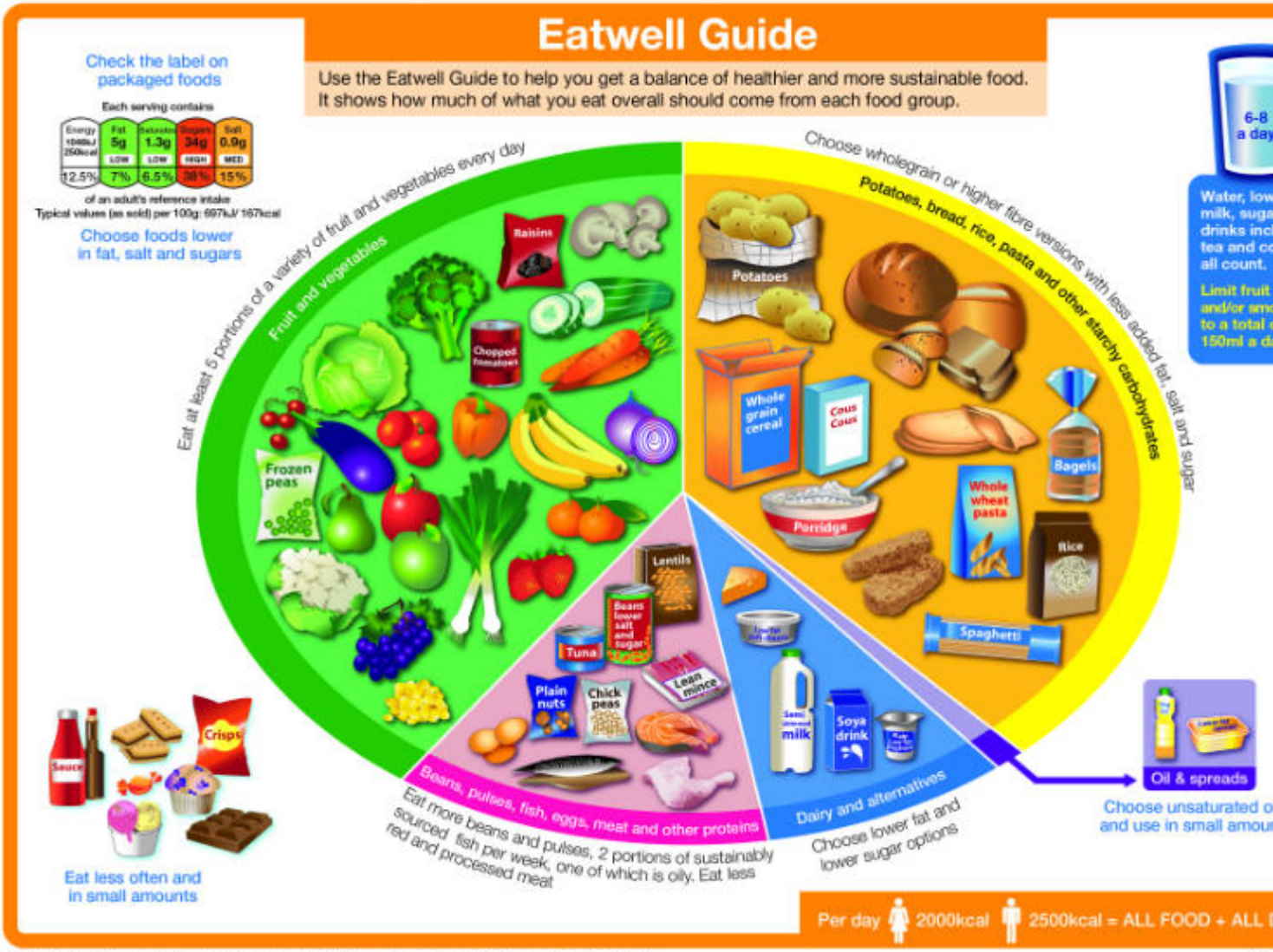
The UK Health Department recommends that all babies from six months until five years are given supplements to help make sure they are getting enough vitamins A, C and D. However, babies who are having more than 500ml (about a pint) of infant formula a day should not be given vitamin supplements. This is because formula is fortified with vitamins A, C and D and other nutrients.

What food should I limit?

You should limit the following foods to mealtimes and only give very small amounts.

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

- Fried food
- Crisps
- Packet snacks
- Pastries
- Cakes
- Biscuits



What should I avoid giving?

You should avoid giving your child any of the following:

- Sweetened fruit squashes
- Fizzy drinks

- Tea and coffee
- Undiluted fruit juices – only give water
- Whole nuts - they are not suitable for children under five, as they may cause choking or be inhaled.

What about physical activity?

- Encourage physical activity for at least three hours every day, and about 12 hours sleep
- Physical activities include inside and outside play, walking, running and dancing
- Limit television and other screen time such as computers to just one hour a day.

The five food groups

- Carbohydrates – bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, and other starchy food.
- Vitamins and minerals - fruit and vegetables
- Dairy – milk, cheese, and yoghurt
- Protein – meat, fish, eggs, nuts, and pulses

- Foods and drinks high in fat and sugar.

Toddler size portions of Carbohydrates

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

- Half –1 slice wholegrain or white breads or ¼ – ¾ bread roll
- 3 – 6 tablespoons of wholegrain or fortified breakfast cereals without a sugar coating. No need to add extra sugar – sweeten naturally with dried or fresh fruit
- 5 – 8 tablespoons of hot cereal like porridge made up with milk
- 2 – 5 tablespoons of rice or pasta
- Half - 1 ½ egg sized potatoes or 1 – 4 tablespoons of mashed potato
- Half – 2 crispbreads or 1 – 3 crackers.

Toddler size portions Fruit and vegetables

Offer your child fruit and vegetables at each meal and at snack time:

- ¼ – ½ medium apple, orange, ¼ – ¾ pear or ¼ –1 medium banana

- 3 – 10 small berries or grapes (quartered)
- 2 – 4 tablespoons of raw, freshly cooked, stewed or mashed fruit
- 1 – 3 tablespoons of raw or cooked vegetables. You can use fresh, frozen or canned fruit/vegetables.

Toddler size portions of Dairy

Give your child three toddler size portions per day:

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

Toddler size portions of Proteins

Give your child two or three toddler size portions of protein per day:

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

Toddler size portions of Foods/drinks high in fat and sugar

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

- Half –1 digestive biscuit or 1 –2 small biscuits
- 1 tablespoon of butter, oil or 1 – 2 tablespoons of mayonnaise
- 4 – 6 crisps
- Limit sweetened milkshakes
- Keep sugary drinks and foods to mealtimes.

Websites for further information:

www.healthystart.nhs.uk www.nhs.uk www.nhs.uk/change4life

www.firststepsnutrition.org https://essentialparent.com

Link to Heath Visiting Information 

Link to School Nursing Information 

Sample menu 1

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 cherrytomatoes (quartered), water
Tea/dinner	Beef mince and vegetables with mashed potatoes, jellywith fruit and dairy ice- cream,water
Evening drink	Milk

Sample menu 2

Breakfast	Whole meal cereal with milk and raisinsor apricots, milk
Mid-morning snack	Plain pancakewith yoghurt and sliced pear, water
Lunch	Mushroom omelet, carrot sticks (raw or lightly cooked), rice pudding, water
Mid-afternoon snack	Crackers with houmous, slicedapple, water
Tea/dinner	Tuna, bean, broccoli and sweetcorn pasta,fresh fruit plate,water

Evening drink	Milk.

Sample menu 3

Breakfast	Toast with banana, milk
Mid-morning snack	Pitta bread,cucumber/pepper sticks,water
Lunch	Baked beanson a jacket potato, plainyoghurt with strawberries, water
Mid-afternoon snack	Oatcake withcottage cheese, grapes(quartered), water
Tea/dinner	Chicken/chickpea and vegetable curry with rice, stewed applesand raisins withcustard, water
Evening drink	Water



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