

Toddler Feeding

A general guide for feeding your toddler



The amount of calories each toddler needs is different from one child to the next. Things like how tall they are, how much they weigh, how much exercise they get and whether they are sick or healthy can make a big difference in calorie needs. This means figuring out exactly how much food your child should eat can be tricky.

Paying close attention to serving sizes is a good place to start. In general, a toddler's portion should be about $1/4$ of an adult's serving. An average toddler-sized meal should include:

- One ounce of meat or 2-3 tablespoons of beans
- 1-2 tablespoons of vegetables
- 1-2 tablespoons of fruit
- $1/4$ slice of bread

The pictures below can help you choose serving sizes based on the size of some common objects.

- A baseball is about 1 cup
- A tennis ball is about $3/4$ cup
- A computer mouse is about $1/2$ cup
- An egg is about $1/4$ cup
- A deck of cards is about 3 ounces
- A golf ball is about 2 tablespoons



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Remember that each child grows and changes at their own pace, so your child's calorie needs could be very different from another child the same age. The following table provides some typical nutrition needs of toddlers.

Food group	Food	Serving size	Servings per day	Total amount per day
Dairy	Milk or yogurt	$\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup	2-3	16 - 24 ounces
	Cheese	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce		
Grains	Bread	$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ slice	6	3-5 ounces
	Cooked rice or pasta	4 Tbsp		
	Dry cereal	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup		
	Crackers	1-2		
Fruit	Cooked or canned fruit	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	2-3	1 - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups
	Fresh or frozen fruit	$\frac{1}{2}$ piece		
	Juice	2-4 ounces	No more than 1	
Vegetables	Vegetables	1 Tbsp for each year of age	2-3	1 - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups
Protein	Meat, fish, tofu, or egg	1 ounce or 2 Tbsp	3-4	3-4 ounces
	Soaked or cooked beans or legumes	2 Tbsp		
	Creamy peanut butter	1 Tbsp		