

Every child develops  
in their own way.  
Celebrate the  
positive ways  
your child grows  
and learns!



### Growth is a measure of good health.

Growth depends mostly on genes and good nutrition. Your child may grow more some months than others. During growth spurts, they will usually eat more. Regular well-child checkups are important. If you are concerned about your child's growth, talk with their doctor or dietitian.

A healthy child:

- Has energy to play.
- Sleeps well.
- Enjoys a variety of healthy foods.

### Keep your family's food safe. ▾ ▾ ▾

4 steps can help prevent  
food poisoning at home:

#### 1. Clean

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after you handle food.
- Before your child eats, make sure they wash their hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing the ABC song).
- Rinse fruits and vegetables with running tap water.
- Always use soap and water to wash cutting boards, dishes, and utensils (such as knives, forks, and spatulas) after they touch raw meat, poultry, eggs, or seafood.

#### 2. Separate

- Keep raw meat, poultry (such as chicken and turkey), and seafood away from foods that won't be cooked, such as fresh vegetables or fruit.

#### 3. Cook

- Heat before you eat. Poultry, microwaved foods, and reheated leftovers should be at least 165°.

#### 4. Chill

- Food should be stored and chilled quickly. Use BPA-free or glass, stainless steel, or ceramic containers to store, heat, or serve food or drink. Avoid letting foods sit at room temperature for more than two hours.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FOOD SAFETY

##### • VISIT:

[www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov) (search the website for "4 steps")

#### FOR HELP FINDING NUTRITION RESOURCES

WithinReach

Call the WithinReach Help Me Grow Washington  
Hotline at **1-800-322-2588** (711 TTY relay)  
or [www.ParentHelp123.org](http://www.ParentHelp123.org)



To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers needing assistance, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email [doh.information@doh.wa.gov](mailto:doh.information@doh.wa.gov).

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# Feeding Your Child

○ 18 MONTHS TO 3 YEARS





*You provide a variety of healthy foods.*

*Your child will choose how much of those foods to eat.*

**You are your child's best teacher.**

**Tips for teaching good eating habits:**

- Serve a variety of foods at meal and snack times.
- Shop for foods with your child. Let your child pick out a fruit or vegetable.
- Make mealtime family time. Turn off the TV, tablet, and phone.
- Have fun in the kitchen. Your child can help cut food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.

**Build a healthy plate. \* \* \***

Your child's stomach is small, so their meals will be too. A child's portion size is about a tablespoon of food per year of age for each of the foods on their plate. Let your child ask for more if they are still hungry.

**Learning to eat new foods. Δ Δ Δ**

Your child is learning how foods look, feel, taste, and smell. They are also learning how to use a cup and spoon. It's a messy process. Be patient with your child as they learn to eat.

**Start healthy habits early.**

**Avoid food battles by trying these tips:**

- Use phrases such as, "We can try these vegetables again another time. Everybody likes different foods, don't they?"
- Let your child decide what and how much to eat from what you provide for the meal.
- Offer a variety of healthy food choices and include 1 or 2 foods that your child likes.

**Smart snacks are healthy snacks! For example:**

- Snacks are a good way to introduce new foods.
- Healthy snacks offered about every 2 to 3 hours help give your child the energy they need.
- Snacks are little meals, not treats.
- Remember to reward your child with your love and attention, not food.

**Be active together. Hop, skip, jump, run, dance, and have fun playing.**

**A severe food allergy can be life-threatening.**

Talk with your child's doctor or nurse if you are worried about a food allergy.



Help your child learn to love a variety of foods!



**How can I help my child learn to like fruits and vegetables?** \* \* \*

Make eating fruits and vegetables fun.

Here are some tips:

- While shopping for food, encourage your child to choose a new fruit or vegetable to try each week.
- Offer a rainbow of fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables: red, orange, yellow, dark green, blue, and purple.
- Let your child help prepare meals. Ask them to wipe off the counter, wash fruits and vegetables, or stir ingredients. Children are often more willing to try foods if they helped make them.

**How can I prevent my child from choking?** Δ Δ Δ

Have your child sit down to eat and supervise them while they eat.

Do not feed children younger than 4 years old:

- Whole nuts
- Round, hard candies
- Popcorn and chips

**Learning CPR can help keep your whole family safe.**

To learn more visit:

[depts.washington.edu/learncpr](https://depts.washington.edu/learncpr)

**How do I know if my child is eating enough?** ○ ○ ○

Your child is eating enough if they have plenty of energy and are growing.

Here are some other things to keep in mind:

- Children may eat more on some days than others.
- Start with small servings and give your child more if they want it.

- Your child may not be hungry if they drink too much juice, sweet drinks, or milk during the day.
- If you breast or chest feed, your milk comforts your child and provides good nutrition.



**Menu ideas for your child.**

Children's calorie needs vary. Here are some daily food menu ideas. Your child may need to eat more or less than these sample plans. Start with small portions and offer more. Let your child decide when they have eaten enough and when they need more.

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**Breakfast:**

- ¼ to ½ cup of grains
- ½ cup of fruit
- ½ cup of dairy\*

**Morning snack:**

- ¼ cup of grains
- ½ cup of fruit

**Lunch:**

- ½ cup of grains
- ½ cup of vegetables
- 1 ounce of protein
- ½ cup of dairy\*

**Afternoon snack:**

- ½ cup of vegetables
- ½ cup of dairy\*

**Dinner:**

- ¼ to ½ cup of grains
- ½ cup of vegetables
- ½ cup of dairy\*
- 2 ounces of protein

**Breakfast:**

- ¼ to ½ cup of grains
- ¼ cup of fruit
- 1 ounce of protein

**Morning snack:**

- ½ cup of fruit
- 1 cup of dairy\*

**Lunch:**

- ½ to 1 cup of grains
- ½ cup of vegetables
- ½ cup of fruit

**Afternoon snack:**

- ½ cup of vegetables
- ½ cup of dairy\*

**Dinner:**

- ½ cup of grains
- ½ cup of vegetables
- ½ cup of dairy\*
- 2 ounces of protein

\* Low-fat milk is recommended for children 2 years and older.

**Δ Vegetables**

**OFFER 4 OR MORE SERVINGS EVERY DAY.**

Offer a colorful rainbow of fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables.

**HOW MUCH IS A SERVING SIZE OF VEGETABLES?**

- ½ cup of dark leafy greens
- ¼ cup of mashed sweet potato
- ½ small ear of corn
- ¼ cup of sliced bell peppers



**○ Fruits**

**OFFER 4 OR MORE SERVINGS EVERY DAY.**

Offer a variety of fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits. Limit fruit juice to no more than half a cup (4 ounces) a day.

**HOW MUCH IS A SERVING SIZE OF FRUIT?**

- 1 small apple
- ½ cup of banana
- ½ cup of strawberries
- ½ cup of pears



**◇ Dairy**

**OFFER 4 SERVINGS EVERY DAY.**

Until your child is 2, they need the fat in whole milk for growth and energy. After that, offer low-fat or fat-free milk. If your child has trouble drinking milk or doesn't eat dairy regularly, talk to your doctor or nutritionist for advice on foods you can work into your child's diet to ensure they are getting the calcium and fat they need.

**HOW MUCH IS A SERVING SIZE OF DAIRY?**

- ½ cup of yogurt
- ⅓ cup of reduced-fat or low-fat shredded cheese
- ½ cup of cottage cheese
- ½ cup of milk



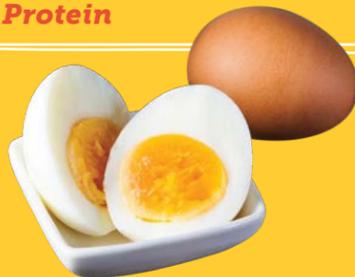
**✕ Protein**

**OFFER 2 OR MORE SERVINGS EVERY DAY.**

Offer a variety of lean meats, eggs, dried beans, and lentils.

**HOW MUCH IS A SERVING SIZE OF PROTEIN?**

- 1 ounce of cooked chicken, fish, or turkey
- 1 small egg
- 4 tablespoons of cooked beans (such as chickpeas or kidney, pinto, or white beans)
- ¼ cup (about 2 ounces) of tofu



**○ Grains**

**OFFER 6 OR MORE SERVINGS EVERY DAY.**

Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or another cereal grain is a grain product. Whole grains provide the most fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Try to make half of the grains you offer whole grains.

**HOW MUCH IS A SERVING SIZE OF GRAINS?**

- ½ slice of bread or tortilla
- ¼ to ⅓ cup of cooked pasta or rice
- ¼ to ⅓ cup of dry cereal



Read food labels.

Limit foods high in saturated fats and sugar.

Offer foods rich in other nutrients.

For more nutrition information, visit [myplate.gov/life-stages/kids](https://myplate.gov/life-stages/kids)