



What you need to know about Feeding your 15-month-old

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR CHILD'S 15-MONTH VISIT:

- Should I worry if my child only eats a little during mealtimes?
- What is the best way to serve my child meals and snacks?
- Why should my child have meals with the family?
- Why won't my child try new foods?

1 LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD'S HUNGER AND FULLNESS CUES.

Your child is growing up fast, and he is probably letting you know (with words or other nonverbal signals) when he's hungry and when he's had enough to eat. In fact, "no!" is probably one of his favorite words.

Allowing your toddler to decide how much and what he eats during meals and snacks will help him continue to listen to his body's hunger and fullness cues, ensuring that he gets the right amount of food. Toddlers get balanced nutrition over the course of several meals, so if he doesn't eat much at one meal, he will eat more at the next meal or the next day.

2 MAKE SITTING DOWN TO EAT A PRIORITY.

Why teach your child to sit down for snacks and mealtimes?

- It will help him focus on eating and getting the nutrients he needs.
- It will teach him how you expect him to behave, leading to less stress at mealtimes.
- It allows him to better recognize his hunger and fullness cues so he eats the right amount of food.
- Toddlers need a snack and mealtime routine. Knowing when he can expect a snack or meal provides your toddler with a sense of security, helping make meal and snack times easier.

The 411 on snacking

Your child's tummy can only hold a small amount of food, so he will need three nutritious small meals and two to three small snacks throughout the day.

3 MAKE MEALTIME A FAMILY AFFAIR.

Kids learn best from imitating the people around them, and eating is no exception. When you eat together as a family, your child learns what and how to eat by watching everyone around him. If you eat your veggies and fruit and drink water, he will want to do the same thing.

4 BE PATIENT AND PERSISTENT, AND LET HIM FEED HIMSELF.

It's normal to want to feed your baby; however, when kids feed themselves, they are able to explore and enjoy their food on their own. This is the best way to help your child develop into a good eater.

What else can you do to promote good eating habits?

- Provide foods that are bite-sized and easy to handle.
- Keep introducing new foods. It is normal for your child to make funny faces or even refuse to eat a food—especially if it is new.
- Be a role model. Your child may be more interested in a food if he sees you eat it first.

5 SERVE WATER IN BETWEEN MEALS AND MILK AT MEALTIMES.

By now, your child should be letting go of his sippy cup and transitioning to drinking from an open cup. Whether he drinks from a sippy or an open cup, it is best to fill it with water or milk.

What should your child be drinking?

- Water is the best drink for your child's thirst, and it should be given to him in between meals.
- Giving your child milk in between meals can cause him to eat less at meal and snack times. **It is best to limit your child's milk to 16 ounces per day.**
- Sugar-sweetened drinks, like fruit juice, fruit punch, soda, lemonade or powdered drink mixes, are not good for your child. They can cause tooth decay and prevent your child from eating healthier foods.

What to expect next:

- You may notice that your child loves a food one day and will not touch it the next, or he may just want to eat the same foods over and over again. This is probably just a phase that will not last forever, so no need to label your child a "picky eater."
- At this age, some children only want to eat a few select foods. Don't worry. Continue to trust yourself and offer a variety of healthy foods, letting your child decide what and how much to eat.
- Continue to provide meals and snacks at the table in a calm, distraction-free setting to help ensure your child gets the most nutrition.

Did you know?



Letting your toddler feed himself helps him develop the skills needed to start using a fork and spoon.

No juice zone

Your child does not need fruit juice (even 100%). It has lots of sugar and does not have the healthy fiber that comes from whole fruit.