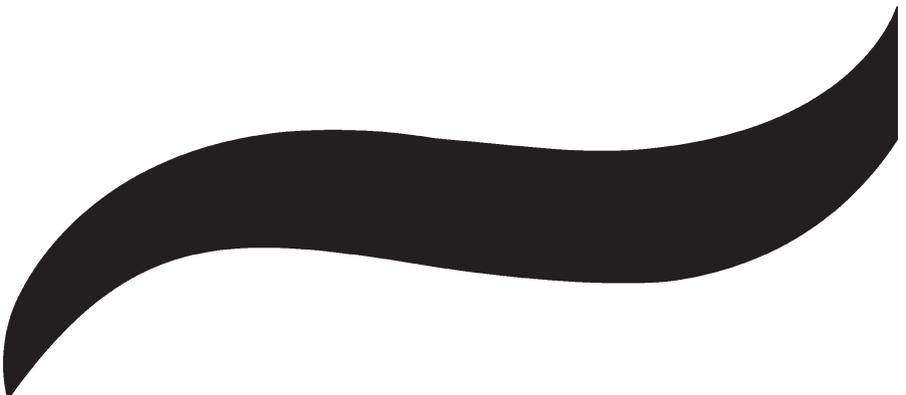




# Feeding Children 1-5 Years

Information for patients



# WHAT IS THE BEST FOOD AND DRINK FOR YOUNG CHILDREN?

Having a healthy diet is important for children to grow and develop. Foods containing iron are vital from 6 months of age.

It is normal for toddlers to refuse some meals or certain types of foods and this can change from day to day. Do bear in mind that it takes a long time for children to know what they like and dislike so continue to offer a variety of foods.

## Do

- ❖ Give 3 meals and 2 or 3 snacks
- ❖ Keep meal times to a maximum of 30 minutes
- ❖ Offer a savoury course then sweet option, for example fruit, yoghurt or milky pudding
- ❖ Include a drink at meal and snacks
- ❖ Have iron rich foods every day, for example, cooked meats, oily fish, eggs, pulses or fortified cereals. (refer to leaflet on iron deficiency for more iron rich options)
- ❖ Eat with other children and adults at a table as role models
- ❖ Switch off TV and computer and remove all other distractions
- ❖ Offer small portions which can be finished, then children can ask for more
- ❖ Give lots of praise when they eat well
- ❖ Take away uneaten food without any fuss
- ❖ Use reward charts to encourage eating and drinking
- ❖ Make eating fun by making faces with children's meals or have a picnic in the garden
- ❖ Stop using bottles when they can drink from a cup
- ❖ Try messy play, reading books about food or growing vegetables to increase the variety in your child's diet

## Don't

- ❖ Swap food refused for another alternative which you know your child would prefer
- ❖ Fill up on too much fluid or snacks before meals
- ❖ Give food as a reward
- ❖ Force feed
- ❖ Add salt or sugar to food
- ❖ Offer tea, coffee, fizzy drinks or more than 1 pint of milk in a day. These can cause young children to feel full and might result in them eating less. Tea makes it harder for iron to be absorbed.

## Here is an example for a day

### **Breakfast**

- ◆ cereal with milk: porridge or weetabix OR toast with spread & jam
- ◆ cup of milk or water

### **Mid morning**

- ◆ chopped fruit or vegetables or breadsticks or plain biscuit
- ◆ cup of water or diluted fruit juice

### **Lunch**

- ◆ minced meat/poached fish/ scrambled egg/baked beans/ grated cheese
- ◆ with toast fingers, pitta bread, potatoes, sweet potatoes, rice or pasta

- ◆ with vegetables or salad
- ◆ Yoghurt or rice pudding or custard with chopped fruit
- ◆ cup of water

### **Mid afternoon**

- ◆ chopped fruit or vegetables or breadsticks or plain biscuit
- ◆ Cup of water or diluted fruit juice

### **Evening meal**

- ◆ small portion of family meal see under lunch for ideas

### **Supper**

- ◆ Chopped fruit or yoghurt or cereal or toast or plain biscuit
- ◆ Cup of milk

## Vitamin Supplements

Pre-school children from 6 months should take a supplement containing Vitamins A, C & D eg Healthy Start Vitamin drops.

## Fluid

Children should be encouraged to drink water or milk. Fizzy drinks should be avoided. Fruit juice and smoothies contain sugar and should be diluted with water especially for children under 5 years. Offer a drink with meals and in between, more will be need in hot weather or after exercise.

## Salt

Children do not need salt added to their food, use pepper, herbs & spices instead. Packet noodles, crisps and ready meals should be limited as they contain large amounts of salt.

### Contact details:

Community Dietitians:  
01698 754800

University Hospital Wishaw:  
01698 366188



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