

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD NUTRITION

Toddlerhood
series



Developing good eating habits in toddlers is important since it lays the basis of forming long term healthy habits. Right nutrition is important for achieving optimal growth and development. Here are few guidelines to help you:

1. Go easy on fats and opt for healthy oils:

Fat is essential nutrient for your growing child as it provides essential fatty acids for his growing brain and body and energy to fuel his high level of activity. Use healthy oils, e.g. Soybean, canola and olive oil in your cooking but keep the quantity small for the whole family. Offer him 1 to 2 servings a week of DHA rich foods e.g. salmon, tuna and mackerel.



2. Reap the benefits of fruits and vegetables:

Children learn to enjoy fruits and vegetables at young age. Use this time wisely to cultivate in your child a love for nature's source of vitamins, minerals, fiber and antioxidants. Serve a variety to maximize nutritional intake. Choose brightly colored red, yellow, orange and dark ones most of the time.



GREEN



RED



YELLOW & ORANGE



VIOLET

3. Encourage whole grains.

Whole grains are intact and not processed. They contain fiber and other essential nutrients. E.g. of whole grain foods: Whole wheat chapatti, whole grain bread, brown rice, oats etc. Introduce whole grains gradually in your child's diet. Start with ½ to 1 serving/ day. e.g. 1 serving: 1 slices of whole wheat bread or ½ cup of cooked oats. Ensure your child drinks plenty of fluids.



4. Choose healthier drinks:

Milk and water remains the healthiest drink for your toddler. They need around 500 ml of milk a day. Clean, boiled and cool water makes the best thirst quenchers. According to US Institute of Medicine, toddlers need about 1.3 lt of fluid a day.

Soft drinks, cordials and juice drinks are best avoided as:

- They are high in sugar and calories, but contain very little vitamin and minerals
- They can cause tooth decay and if consumed in excess can may your kid overweight.



5. Limit salt and sugar intakes in your toddlers diet.

A high sodium diet may increase the risk of high blood pressure. Too much sugary foods and drinks in the diet may lead to: overweight, which is a risk factor for chronic diseases and dental carries.



Avoid the salt habit in your child by:

- Minimizing the use of salt and sauces in your child's food
- Encouraging unsalted or lightly salted snacks
- Going fresh and limiting intake of processed foods (e.g. canned foods)

Stop your child from developing a sweet tooth by:

- Choosing plain water and milk instead of sweetened drinks
- Offer fresh fruits as snacks rather than sweet desserts
- Limiting intake of jams, chocolates, candies and ice-cream
- Not offering sweets and lollies as rewards for good behavior

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Breast milk is the best food for babies as it is the sole source of nutrition for the first 6 months of life and is recommended to be continued until 2 years, with introduction to appropriate complementary foods after 6 months of age.

A. Following are the details of advantages, as also nutritional superiority of breast-feeding :

- i) Immediately after delivery, breast milk is yellowish and sticky. This milk is called as Colostrum, which is secreted during the first week of delivery. Colostrum is more nutritious than that of mature milk because it contains more protein, more anti-infective properties which are of great importance for the infant's defence against dangerous neo-natal infections. It also contains higher level of Vitamin 'A';
- ii) Breast Milk -
 - a) Is a complete and balanced food that provides all the nutrients needed by the infant (for the first six months of life);
 - b) Has anti-infective properties that protect the infants from infection the early months;
 - c) Is always available;
 - d) Needs no utensils or water (which might carry germs) or fuel its preparations;
- iii) Breast-feeding is much cheaper than feeding infant milk substitutes as the cost of the extra food needed by the mother is negligible compared to the cost of feeding infant milk substitutes;
- iv) Mothers who breast-feed usually have longer periods of infertility after child birth than non-lactators;

B. Details of management of breast-feeding, are as under :

- i) Breast-feeding-
 - a) Immediately after delivery enables the contraction of the womb and helps the mother to regain her figure quickly;
 - b) Is successful when the infant suckles frequently and the mother wanting to breast-feed is confident in her ability to do so;
- ii) In order to promote and support breast-feeding the mother's natural desire to breast-feed should always be encouraged by giving, where needed, practical advice and making sure that she has the support of her relatives;
- iii) Adequate care for the breast and nipples should be taken during pregnancy;
- iv) It is also necessary to put the infant to the breast as soon as possible after delivery;
- v) Let the mother and the infant stay together after the delivery, the mother and her infant should be allowed to stay together (in the hospital, this is called "rooming-in");
- vi) Give the infant Colostrum as it is rich in many nutrients and its anti-infective factors protect the infants from infections during the few days of its birth;
- vii) The practise of discarding Colostrum and giving sugar water, honey water, butter or other concoctions instead of Colostrum should be very strongly discouraged;
- viii) Let the infants suckle on demand;
- ix) Every effort should be made to breast-feed the infants whenever they cry;
- x) Mother should keep her body and clothes and that of the infant always neat and clean,