

Texas Children's Hospital

Caring for Your Child's Health

Feeding Your Child

Ages 1 to 6

1 to 3 years

Children this age can eat most foods that the family eats. Cut the food into small bite-sized pieces. Begin weaning from a bottle; beverages should be served in a cup. See the chart inside for guidelines on serving size.



- Let your child be the judge of how much to eat. Don't try to force your child to eat. It makes mealtime very unpleasant. Sometimes children are picky eaters, and food intake may appear inconsistent. Don't worry if your child skips a meal or a snack; most likely they will eat better at the next scheduled meal or snack. Allow your child to eat as much healthy food as he or she wants during meals and snacks.
- Most children younger than 2 need **whole** milk.
- Children's energy needs are high but their stomachs are small. They need to eat every 3 to 4 hours and tend to do better with scheduled meal times. Give your child fruits, sandwiches, crackers, yogurt, milk, low sugar cereals and cheese. Avoid snacks like cookies, candy, chips, and carbonated or sugary drinks. If children fill up on low nutrition value foods they may take the place of healthier foods in the diet.
- Children can also fill up on juice and then not eat enough other foods. Limit juice to four ounces per day.



- Children over the age of 2 who are growing normally can adopt a low-fat diet including skim milk.

Choking caution

The following items can choke children under 3. **Do not** give these to children under age 3.

Hot dogs	Hard candies	Grapes
Popcorn	Raw carrots	Ice cubes
Nuts	Marshmallows	Gum
Olives	Peanut butter (see chart)	

3 to 6 years

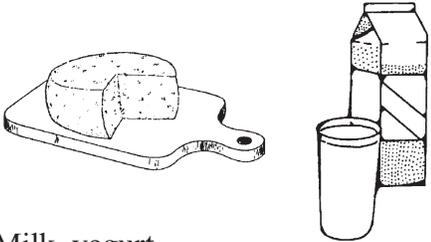
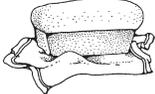
For children 3 to 6 years, use the same general guidelines as for the 1 to 3 year olds:

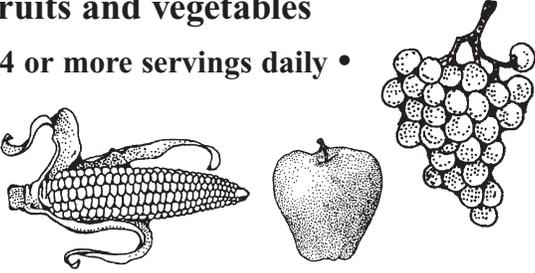
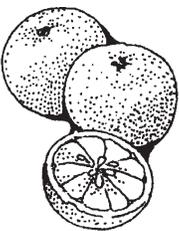
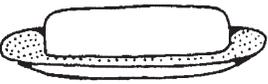
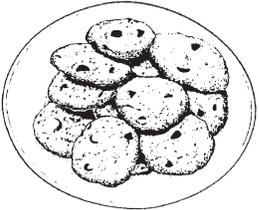
- Let your child decide how much to eat.
- Offer healthy snacks.

See the chart inside for guidelines.

Letting children help fix foods can be messy, but they are more likely to try foods they have helped to make.



Food groups and number of servings	Serving size guidelines for ages		
	1 to 2 years	2 to 4 years	4 to 6 years
Milk and milk products • 4 servings daily • 	Only whole milk and whole milk products	Skim or 1% milk and low fat dairy products	Skim or 1% milk and low fat dairy products
Milk, yogurt	4 to 6 ounces	4 to 6 ounces	4 to 8 ounces
Cheese	1/3 ounce	2/3 to 1 ounce	1 ounce
Meat and other protein foods • 2 Servings Daily • 			
Beef, pork, poultry, lamb, fish, veal	1/2 to 1 ounce	1/2 to 1 1/2 ounce	1 to 2 ounces
Eggs 	1/2	3/4	1
Peanut butter (not by itself; you can mix it with jelly or applesauce)	Not recommended	1 tablespoon after age 3	1 to 2 tablespoons
Legumes or beans	1/4 cup	1/4 to 1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Breads, cereals and starches • 4 or more servings daily • Whole grain breads 	1/2 to 1 slice	3/4 to 1 slice	1 slice
Cooked cereals, rice, pasta 	1/4 cup	1/3 to 1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Ready to eat cereals	1/4 to 1/2 cup	1/2 to 3/4 cup	3/4 cup

Food groups and number of servings	Serving size guidelines for ages		
	1 to 2 years	2 to 4 years	4 to 6 years
<p>Fruits and vegetables</p> <p>• 4 or more servings daily •</p> 			
<p>Vitamin C sources</p> <p>• At least 1 serving daily •</p> <p>citrus fruit or juice, berries, melons, tomatoes, peppers, broccoli</p> 	<p>4 ounces of juice (optional)</p> <p>1 to 2 tablespoons or more of vegetables and fruits</p>	<p>4 ounces of juice (optional)</p> <p>2 to 4 tablespoons or more of vegetables or fruits</p>	<p>4 ounces of juice (optional)</p> <p>4 or more tablespoons of vegetables or fruits</p>
<p>Vitamin A sources</p> <p>• At least 1 serving every other day •</p> <p>dark green and yellow fruits and vegetables (carrots, green beans, broccoli, spinach, sweet potatoes, peas, peaches, apricots, melons, squash, pumpkin)</p> 	<p>1 to 2 tablespoons or more of vegetables or fruits</p>	<p>2 to 4 tablespoons or more of vegetables or fruits</p>	<p>4 or more tablespoons of vegetables or fruits</p>
<p>Fats and oils</p> <p>• 3 servings daily •</p> 	<p>Do not limit</p>	<p>1 to 3 teaspoons</p>	<p>1 to 3 teaspoons</p>
<p>Other</p> <p>Jams, jellies, soft drinks, candy, sweet desserts, salty, high-fat snacks</p> 	<p>Use a small or medium amount if desired</p>	<p>Use a small or medium amount if desired</p>	<p>Use a small or medium amount if desired</p>

Keep Your Own Food Chart				
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Milk and milk products 4 servings daily				
Meet and other protein foods 2 servings daily				
Breads, cereals, and starches 4 or more servings daily				
Fruits and vegetables 4 or more servings daily Vitamin C sources Vitamin A sources				
Fats and oils 3 servings daily				
Other				



**Texas Children’s
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*Developed by the Department of Food and Nutrition Services;
Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition.*

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