

# 15-18 MONTHS

Your toddler from fifteen to eighteen months  
Supporting your family during your child's second year



**15-18  
MONTHS**





## YOUR TODDLER AT 15 - 18 MONTHS

Healthy eating and active play are important for your toddler.

This booklet provides information on your toddler's health and tips for parents' health too.

### RECOMMENDATIONS



#### Nutrition

- Continue breastfeeding up to 2 years and beyond
- Use a cup instead of a bottle - **STOP** all bottles at this age
- Drinks can include:
  - water
  - full fat cow's milk
  - soy or calcium enriched rice and oat milk - can be used under health professional supervision
- Toddlers need a wide variety of healthy family foods every day



#### Active play

- **Encourage free movement:** At least 3 hours spent in a variety of active physical play throughout the day
- **Limit inactivity:** Children aged 0 - 5 years should not be inactive for longer than an hour at a time, unless they are sleeping
- **No screen time:** Children under 2 years should have no screen time including no TV, DVDs, using computers, iPads, tablets, smart phones, or any other electronic devices
- **Sleep:** 11 - 14 hours of good quality sleep, including naps, with regular sleep and awake times



#### Immunisation

- At 18 months your toddler is due for immunisations to protect them from serious childhood illnesses See [www.nsw.health.gov/immunisations](http://www.nsw.health.gov/immunisations)
- Your toddler is due for their 18 month developmental Personal Health Record (Blue Book) check. Make an appointment with your Child and Family Health Nurse or GP and remember to:
  - get your child's weight checked
  - get your child's length checked
  - record their weight and length in their blue book

## FEEDING YOUR TODDLER



### TRANSITIONING FROM INFANCY TO TODDLERHOOD

At 15 - 18 months you will continue to see your child go through many developmental and physical changes as they are transitioning from infancy to toddlerhood. In the first 2 years their nutritional needs change a lot and it is useful to know what they need to grow healthy, and to understand their change in feeding behaviour.

### MILK FEEDING AT 12 - 24 MONTHS

- Breastfeeding will continue to provide many health benefits for your health and your toddler's
- From 12 months you can offer full fat pasteurised cow's milk from a cup and stop all infant formula
- After 12 months of age, only offer a maximum 2 serves (500ml) of milk to your toddler in a day or night. Drinking more than this amount, may lead them to have low iron levels or they may not have an appetite to eat family foods
- It is recommended that toddlers have 2 serves of calcium every day. Calcium sources other than milk include:  
1 serve = ½ cup of boiled broccoli OR ¾ cup of yoghurt OR 2 slices of cheese
- If a toddler has more food or milk than they need in a day it will not help them sleep better. It is important they no longer have night feeds. Help them learn to settle themselves

#### Tips to stop all bottle use

- At around 12 months children should stop having any bottles, so only offer drinks like milk or water from a cup. This can help to reduce the chance of ear infections and tooth decay
- Phase out the bottle by swapping it with a cup of milk. For example, start offering a cup of water or milk instead of a lunchtime bottle, then stop the breakfast bottle and then the dinnertime bottle. This may take a few weeks
- Your toddler may need more cuddles and comfort during this time as this is a big change for them



## FAMILY FOODS

### How much food to provide

From 12 months, your toddler will mainly be eating the same foods as the rest of the family. This might include 3 meals and healthy snacks in between. At this age their growth slows down and their appetite may also change, which is totally normal. Some days your child will eat more and some days less. Let them decide how much they eat at these times.

It is important for children to try and accept a variety of food. Try to limit eating between set meal and snack times so your child is hungry enough to try new foods and eat the meals that you prepare.

### What food to provide

Especially during lunch and dinner try to serve a protein, vegetable, grain and fruit. Check out the 12 – 15 Months Healthy Beginnings booklet to see how many serves your child needs from each group every day.



Below is an example of how to include a variety of food groups in each meal

<b>Breakfast</b> 	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup rolled oats (grain) with full fat milk (protein/diary) and 1 medium banana (fruit) OR 1 slice wholemeal bread (grain) with nut spread (protein) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced strawberries (fruit) and a cup of full fat milk (protein/dairy)
<b>Lunch/Dinner</b> 	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup stir-fry noodles/rice (grain) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mixed vegetables (vegetables) and egg/tofu/chicken/meat (protein) and 1 piece of fruit (fruit) OR Pasta (grain) with meat or cheese (protein/diary) and salad (vegetables) OR A few tablespoons of chopped, grilled meat/chicken/fish (protein) and $\frac{1}{2}$ medium baked/mash potato (grain) and $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 cup of steamed vegetables or salad (vegetables)
<b>Healthy Snacks</b> 	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of plain yoghurt with diced fruit 1 piece of fruit Steamed/boiled vegetable slices Toast fingers with nut spread or avocado or cheese 1 boiled egg

## Healthy eating behaviours

Eating behaviours are learned from the beginning of life and carried through to adulthood. So it is the perfect time to help your toddler learn healthy eating habits. Remember they are still discovering new flavours and textures and are learning about their appetite.

### Tips for Fuss Free Mealtimes

#### Eating environment

- Enjoy eating together as a family. This encourages families to come together, stay connected, learn about each other's day and share healthy foods
- Let your toddler feed themselves with a spoon and their fingers. They love to be independent
- Mealtimes can be messy. You can use material underneath their high chair or a mat if they are sitting on the floor to save cleaning up time
- Remove all distractions during mealtimes. Turn off the TV, iPads, and mobile phones when eating. These distract your toddler from understanding their hunger cues and can set habits to eat more than their body needs

#### Encourage healthy food options

- Keep offering new foods. It can take up to 10 - 15 times of trying a food for someone to decide if they like it or not
- Serve the same food as the rest of the family
- Try not to get stressed or upset if your child does not eat the new foods. The more you fuss about what you would like your child to eat, the more they will fuss and may have a negative experience with the food
- Try to limit eating fast foods. Although they can be convenient, they are expensive and usually contain a lot of unhealthy ingredients like sugar, salt and fat. Aim to choose healthy alternatives (for example, roast chicken with salad and wholemeal bread rolls)
- Try to prepare and have healthy snack options at home. When you are out and about, limit eating unhealthy food like cakes, chips, chocolate or fried food

#### Use non-food based rewards

- Be positive and praise their healthy eating behaviour (for example, "it is great you tried the broccoli")
- Try to use other rewards for good behaviour, other than food treats that are unhealthy. For example, going out to the park, extra play time, picnic on the lounge room floor or backyard, favourite play activity, using stickers and stamps



## Looking after your child's teeth

A dental examination is recommended from 12 months and before your toddler is 2 years old. This helps your toddler get used to having their teeth checked, and ensures their teeth and gums are healthy. See [www.health.gov.au/dental](http://www.health.gov.au/dental) for information about dental service options.

### 3 easy steps to keep your toddler's teeth and gums healthy



**Put your child to bed without a bottle**  
Stop offering any bottles at this age



**Offer water or milk from a cup**  
Toddlers do not need formula milk, flavoured milk, fruit juice, soft drinks or other sweetened drinks



**Help your child brush their teeth morning and night**  
Only use water on your child's toothbrush until they are 18 months, then start using a low fluoride toothpaste



## YOUR TODDLER'S PLAY

Active play is an important part of being healthy. It helps children build strong bones and muscles, improve balance, concentrate, learn new skills, improve the quality of their sleep and maintain a healthy weight. Active play is also a good way for children to make friends.

### Active Play

- Toddlers need to be physically active for at least 3 hours a day - spread out in small amounts throughout the day
- Active play should include scheduled activities like:
  - regular trips to the park with the family - walk, bike ride, play with bats and balls or meet up with friends
  - swimming - supervise all water play
  - if you are gardening - let them join in e.g. digging, raking leaves or weeds
  - attend playgroup every week
- Join a playgroup in your local area
  - all children from 0 - 5 years can benefit from developing mental, physical and social skills with the activities offered at playgroup
  - carers including mums, dads, grandparents and caregivers can also benefit by spending time with the child and meeting others
  - see <http://www.playgroupnsw.org.au/> OR <http://www.resourcingparents.nsw.gov.au/> OR speak to your local council to find playgroups in your area

## Sedentary behaviour

- Children should not be inactive (e.g. in a stroller, car seat or high chair) or sitting for extended periods for longer than 1 hour unless they are asleep
- For those younger than 2 years, screen time is not recommended. Instead encourage other activities such as reading, singing, puzzles and storytelling with a caregiver



## YOUR TODDLER'S SLEEP

Most toddlers will have one sleep during the day and can now sleep through the night.

Toddlers may wake at night, which is normal. They may be unwell, cold, have a wet nappy or feel uncomfortable, or they may be going through a developmental leap. Reassure them with gentle words, or a cuddle and then settle them back to sleep.

They do not need any feeding of milk during the night for their growth at this age - they will get all they need during the day.

**If your toddler's night-waking is causing problems for you and you need support, speak to your Child and Family Health Nurse, GP or contact Karitane 1300 227 464 or Tresillian 1300 272 736.**



## LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

The Healthy Beginnings booklets have provided you with lots of information and tips on why it is important to look after your physical health and diet.

### Food label reading

It can be really tempting to buy packaged food if you are tired or want to save time. Most packaged foods are processed and full of unhealthy ingredients, as well as a lot of salt, sugar and saturated fat.

Reading food labels can help us make healthy and safe food choices. However, they do have a lot of information on them so they can be confusing to read and understand.

The main things to look at include:

- Nutrition Information Panel: lists the amount of nutrients and minerals in a food product
- Ingredients: lists all the ingredients that are in the food product

### When to read food labels

**Staple foods:** These foods are not processed and they are important for our body and to keep healthy e.g. wholegrain bread, rice, oats, fruit, vegetables, dairy, meat, chicken, fish, beans, lentils (*You do not need to check the food label on these foods*)

**Non-staple foods:** These foods are processed and many have a lot of sugars or fats added to them e.g. breakfast cereals, processed frozen food and frozen meals, packaged snacks (e.g. muesli bars, chips, crackers, biscuits), canned foods, sauces in a jar, flavoured milk and yoghurts (*Check the food label on these foods*)



#### Other names for types of sugar

Dextrose, fructose, glucose, golden syrup, honey, maple syrup, sucrose, malt, maltose, lactose, brown sugar, caster sugar, raw sugar, sucrose

#### Other names for types of salt

Baking powder, celery salt, garlic salt, meat/yeast extract, monosodium glutamate - (MSG), onion salt, rock salt, sea salt, sodium, sodium ascorbate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium nitrate/nitrite, stock cubes, vegetable salt

## STEPS TO HELP YOU TO READ FOOD LABELS

EXAMPLE ONLY

### Nutrition Information

Servings per package - 16  
Servings size - 30g (2/3 cup)

#### STEP 2: Total fat

- Generally choose foods with less than 10g per 100g
- Milk and yoghurt: less than 2g per 100g
- Cheese: less than 15g per 100g

	Per serve	Per 100g
Energy	432kJ	1441kJ
Protein	2.8g	9.3g
Fat		
<b>Total</b>	0.4g	1.2g
Saturated	0.1g	0.3g
Carbohydrate		
<b>Total</b>	18.9g	62.9g
<b>Sugars</b>	3.5g	11.8g
Fibre	6.4g	21.2g
<b>Sodium</b>	65mg	215mg

#### STEP 4: Sodium (salt)

Foods with sodium less than 400mg per 100g are good, and less than 120mg per 100g are best

**Ingredients:** Cereals (76%) (wheat, oat bran, barley), psyllium husk (11%), sugar, rice, malt extract, honey, salt, vitamins

#### STEP 5: Check ingredients

Ingredients are listed from greatest to smallest by weight. Use this to check sugar and sodium

#### STEP 1: Use 100g column

If comparing nutrients in similar food products use the Per 100g column

#### STEP 3: Total Sugar

If sugar content per 100g is more than 15g, check that sugar is not high on the ingredients list

## HEALTH FOOD STAR RATING



The Health Star Rating is seen on the front of food packages to help you compare the nutritional value of packaged foods and to make healthy choices when shopping.

The star ratings range from ½ a star to 5 stars - the more stars, the healthier the choice.

### Tips to help you use the Health Star Rating

1

Look for Health Star Rating labels on the front of packaged food and drink when you go shopping. Not all food packages have the rating yet.

2

Use Health Star Ratings to compare foods that are from the SAME category.  
For example:

- You can only compare food products within the same category such as a brand of bread with another bread product
- You CANNOT compare a muesli bar with a Healthy Star Rating of 5 with a bread product with a Healthy Star Rating of 5

3

Choose the product with the best Health Star Rating in each food and drink category.

4

The Health Star Rating is only used on packaged products so remember to always include fresh foods from the 5 food groups.

For more information on the Health Star Rating go to [www.healthstarrating.gov.au](http://www.healthstarrating.gov.au)

## WHAT TO CONSIDER FOR YOUR TODDLER'S HEALTH AT 12 - 24 MONTHS



Keep me healthy, give me fruit and vegetables every day



Water in a cup is best for me and my teeth



Keep me active, I don't need screen time for play



I'm a toddler now, not a baby, I can sleep at night without any milk



Reward me with cuddles and praise, food rewards are unhelpful for me





Next Booklet

**18-24  
MONTHS**

## CONTACT

**HB**

**Healthy Beginnings**  
SLHD-HealthyBeginnings@health.nsw.gov.au  
www.healthybeginnings.net.au  
02 9515 9055

**HD**

**Health Direct Australia**  
www.healthdirect.org.au  
1800 022 222

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