





**Let your toddler drink a meal.** If your youngster would rather drink than eat, try making a smoothie. Milk and fruit, combined with supplements such as juice, wheat germ, yogurt or peanut butter, can be the basis of healthy meals. Caution: Avoid drinks with raw eggs, as you may risk salmonella poisoning.

**Find creative ways to disguise veggies.** Slip grated veggies into favorite foods such as rice, cottage cheese, muffins and even macaroni and cheese.

**Don't be a slave to the clock.** If your youngster insists on eating chicken in the morning and cereal in the evening, let them! The distinction between breakfast, lunch and dinner may have little meaning to the child, and this schedule is likely better than not eating at all.

**Respect your child's developmental stages.** Typically, between their 2nd and 3rd birthdays, your child may become set in their ways about everything, including food. If the cheese must be cut into cubes rather than grated for them to eat it, go with it. It might be better to do it the child's way, because they may not be acting stubborn - they could just have a mindset about the order of things in their world. This phase too will likely pass.



**Will my child get enough nutrients through their daily diet?** The short answer is probably not. It's virtually impossible for children to consistently eat the right combination of foods to provide their necessary nutrition. Avoid giving your child cartoon vitamins because they can contain synthetic vitamins, inadequate minerals and preservatives and sugars children should avoid ingesting. The ideal children's vitamin is all-natural and hypoallergenic, with no synthetic chemical nutrients and no preservatives. It should be derived from whole foods, using a complete and balanced formula that contains at least 25 FDA-recommended nutrients, preferably more. Visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) to view the full list.

Now that you have guidelines for meeting your child's nutritional needs and transitioning through each developmental phase with some practical food ideas, you can relax, take a deep breath and enjoy the new addition to your family. Remember, not every child is the same, so always consult your doctor before making any changes to your child's diet.

There are some foods you might want to avoid in the diet of a young infant, including:

1. *Gluten.* This is a protein found in certain cereals which might lead to a child developing celiac disease.
2. *Salt.* Avoid adding salt to your baby's food. Their miniature kidneys might not be able to process the sodium.
3. *Sugar.* Restrict the amount and frequency of sugary foods and drinks. Young teeth possibly can be damaged from a very early age.
4. *Shellfish.* Many types of shellfish cause an allergic reaction, and some fish (shark, marlin and swordfish) could contain high levels of methyl mercury, which can affect the nervous system.
5. *Whole/chopped nuts.* These can present a choking risk. Peanuts also have been linked to allergy in some families.
6. *Honey.* You should avoid honey in infants less than 1 year of age, as it might contain harmful bacteria.

The following are serving suggestions for the average 2-year-old:

<b>*Food Guide Pyramid</b>	
<b>Servings Per Day</b>	<b>1 Serving Equals</b>
	• 1/4-1/2 slice of bread

GRAINS <i>6 servings per day</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/4 cup cereal, rice or pasta</li> <li>• 1/4 cup dry cereal</li> <li>• 1-2 crackers</li> </ul>
VEGETABLES <i>3 servings per day</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooked vegetables</li> <li>• 1 tablespoon for every year of age</li> </ul>
FRUITS <i>2-3 servings per day</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/4 cup fruit</li> <li>• 1/2 piece fresh fruit</li> <li>• 1/4-1/2 cup juice</li> </ul>
DAIRY <i>2-3 servings per day</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 cup milk</li> <li>• 2 ounces processed cheese</li> <li>• 1-1/2 ounces natural cheese</li> <li>• 1 cup yogurt</li> </ul>
PROTEIN <i>2 ounces per day</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 ounce of solid meat (two 1-inch cubes)</li> <li>• 2 tablespoons of ground meat</li> <li>• 2 tablespoons of cooked dry beans</li> <li>• 1/2 egg, any size</li> </ul>

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**Richard Drucker, ND**, is a licensed naturopath performing concentrated research and work in the natural health and nutraceutical fields for more than 20 years.



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