

# 2½ year visit

## Eating Well



### REMEMBER...

**As the parent, you choose where, what and when your child eats.** Allow your child to choose how much or if they will eat.

**The kitchen is closed other than for planned meals and snacks.** Do not let your child graze on foods and drinks. Only allow water between meals and snacks.



**Your child's growth is slowing which means appetite will decrease and your child will eat less food.** This is a normal stage of development. Your child's appetite will vary from day to day, eating small amounts one day and more the next.

**Enjoy meals together at a table without distractions, television or electronic devices. Serve the same foods to the entire family.**

Meals should include a variety of healthy foods from all food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, protein and dairy).

Talk about new foods with your child. Serve not-yet-liked and liked foods together. Encourage your child to try healthy new foods by offering a very small amount to taste.

**Recognize picky eating is a normal phase of development.** One day the food will be your child's favorite and the next they will not like it. Continue to offer a variety of foods.

**Plan two sit down snacks at about the same time daily** and include foods from 2 food groups at least 1.5-2 hours before meals. Do not let your child eat snacks in the car or when watching TV.

**Children do not need juice. It is best to provide fruit (fresh, frozen or canned) with meals and snacks.**

**Provide sweets on a predictable basis as a treat (1-3 times a week).** Offer as a snack or as a dessert with dinner. Avoid using sweets to reward, bribe or punish your child. Children do not need daily desserts.

**Your child's diet can play a role in dental health.** Avoid sticky sugar caramel, toffee, gum and taffy. These foods can stick to teeth, which cause cavities and are a choking risk.

**Brush your child's teeth with a small, soft toothbrush and pea-sized amount of fluorinated toothpaste twice a day or after sugary food item.**

**Choking Hazards: Your child may gulp food when in a hurry to get on with playing. The risk of choking is high, so avoid the following foods:** hotdogs (unless sliced lengthwise and then across), whole nuts (can be crushed into pieces), hard candies, gum, whole grapes, spoonfuls of peanut butter, whole raw carrots, raw cherries with pits, raw celery and marshmallows.



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## Offer 3 healthy meals and 2 healthy snacks at about the same time each day!

### Dairy: 2 cups a day.

1 cup = 1 cup milk or  
Other Dairy: 1 cup yogurt and 1½ ounces of cheese.

### Vegetables: 1 cup total.

Fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables throughout the day.

### Fruits: 1 cup total.

Fresh, frozen, or no sugar added canned throughout the day.

### Whole Grains: 3 ounces a day.

Bread, cereal, rice and pasta.  
1 ounce = 1 slice of bread,  
½ bun or mini bagel,  
1 cup dried cereal,  
½ cup cooked cereal, rice or pasta.

### Protein: 2 ounces a day.

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts.

1 ounce = 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish, 1 egg,

¼ cup cooked beans (pinto, kidney, black, lima, etc.),

1 tablespoon peanut butter or ½ ounce of chopped nuts and seeds.



## Eating Well CONTINUED

### Sample Meal Pattern

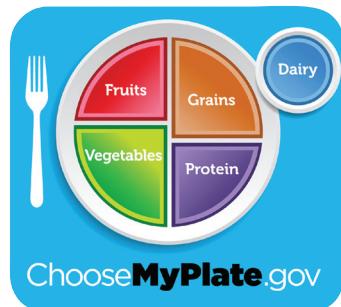
**BREAKFAST:** 1 ounce Grain; ½ cup Milk; ½ ounce Protein

**SNACK:** ½ cup Fruit; ½ cup Other Dairy

**LUNCH:** 1 ounce Grain; ¼ cup Vegetable; ½ ounce Protein; ½ cup Milk

**SNACK:** ¼ cup Vegetable; ½ cup Fruit

**DINNER:** 1 ounce Grain; ½ cup Vegetable; 1 ounce Protein; ½ cup Milk



## Be Active

**Movement is important** for brain development, body strength and coordination. Children at this age should be on the go. Encourage running, kicking balls, climbing and jumping.

Encourage creative play, building and drawing. Play games, dance, read and sing with your child. Encourage your child to do imaginary play.

Children should have 30 minutes of structured activity (adult led) and 60 minutes to several hours of free play every day.

Limit time in the stroller, let your child walk on their own to encourage activity.

Your child can learn to pedal a 3-wheel bike and walk up and down stairs.

### Turn off TV during meal time.

Limit screen time to less than two hours a day (TV, computer, cell phone, iPad™, and video games).

### Be aware of the programs and advertising your child sees.

**Be active together as a family.** Make sure your child is active with all care givers. Include your child on a family scavenger hunt.

### Exploring elements is important

for development; play outdoors in the yard, at the playground or park. Safety and supervision is key.

## Sleep

Children should sleep 12-14 hours in a 24 hour period, including naps of one to three hours.

By this age, your child should have consistent bed and wake times.

Read to your child before bed as part of nightly routine. Stop the story to let your child make animal noises, point to pictures or say words.

Do not allow a TV in your child's bedroom, this negatively affects sleep.