

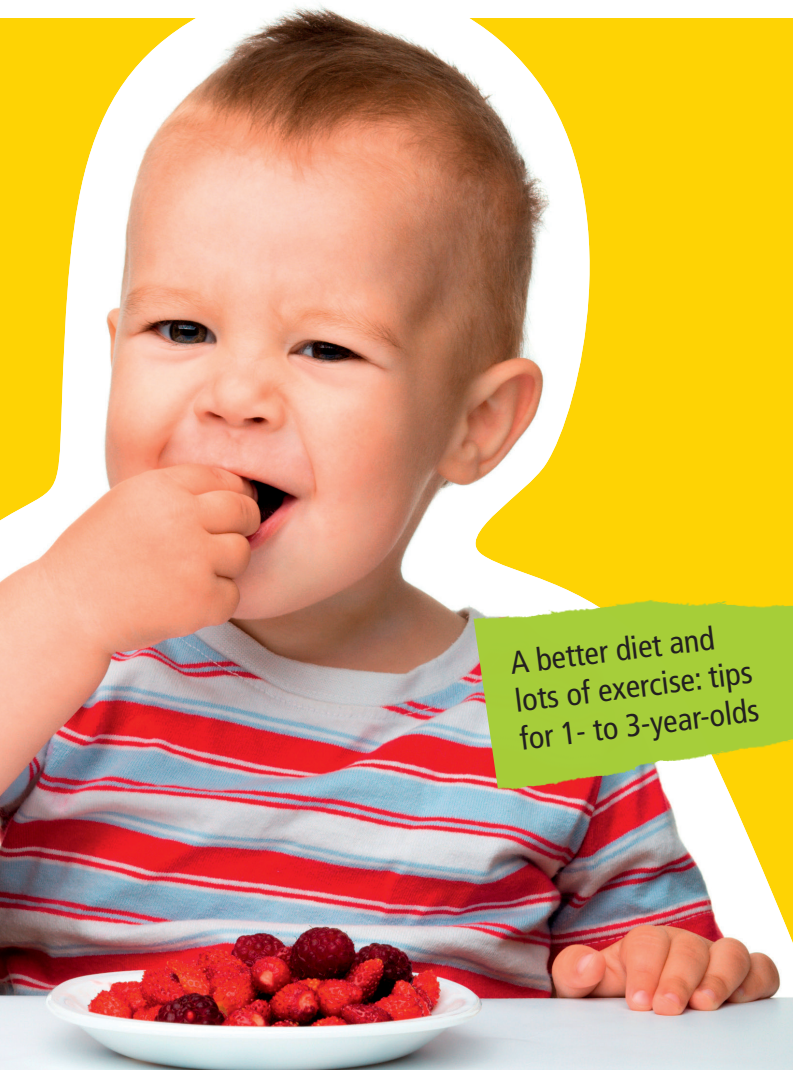
in FORM

Deutschlands Initiative für gesunde Ernährung
und mehr Bewegung



Gesund ins Leben
Netzwerk Junge Familie

What young children need



A better diet and
lots of exercise: tips
for 1- to 3-year-olds



Don't treat me like a baby!

Dear Parents,

Your child is outgrowing his or her infant phase. What follows now is a new and eventful period, full of: "I want to do it myself!" What a delight to sit at the dinner table, eating on your own! And what an adventure, walking upright and exploring the world. During this phase, your child will learn a lot through mimicry. So set a good example for your child – where diet and exercise are concerned as well. Many parents take this time as a welcome opportunity to rethink their own habits. Use the tips you will find in this leaflet as guidance to help you accompany your child on his or her journey of discovery!

Only babies eat pap

The odd exception aside (see Page 12), your child can now eat the same things as the rest of the family. And everyone will benefit from enjoying the same diet.

Drinking from glasses and cups

It's also time to retire the baby bottle: Your child can now drink from a glass or a cup. It's far better for the teeth and the jaws, which are damaged by constant sucking on a bottle.

Forgetting about food for a while

It is important to take a break from eating for at least 2 to 3 hours between meals. This helps develop a healthy appetite for the next helping. That way your child will enjoy eating his or her fill.



Young children like pushing the buggy themselves instead of sitting in it quietly.

From baby food to eating with the family

These meals can replace baby food.

Breastfeeding/bottled milk

Vegetable, potato
and meat pap

Grain and fruit
pap

Milk and
grain pap



Snack



Snack



Dinner

Lunch

Breakfast

The mother and the child decide whether and how often to breastfeed after family meals.

Discovering food is an adventure

Each child is unique!

That's true of eating and drinking, too. Some will scoff anything, while others are picky. Be patient if your child tends to turn up his or her nose at the start. Be adventurous with your food, but not pushy. It takes time to get used to new tastes.

Start off with small portions on the plate. Your child can have seconds if he or she likes. Over time he or she will learn how much he or she needs to feel full. Don't force your child to eat everything up. Leftovers on the plate are fine.

And sometimes, during a phase of growth or development, your child may be particularly hungry, and sometimes less so. That's normal, so do not be concerned!



Tip!

It's up to you what you serve, how you do it, and when. Your child decides how much he or she wants to eat.

Rules for relaxed mealtimes

These rules apply to little ones and adults alike so everyone feels comfortable round the table:

- Set mealtimes – share one meal per day if possible. It strengthens family bonds.
- Start off with a ritual (e.g. saying grace or something non-religious).
- Set the table as a family – your child will enjoy helping!
- Meals taste best at the table and without distraction – so put your phone aside and switch off the TV to enjoy the cozy atmosphere.

Always remember – your child will copy what he or she sees you do!

Practice makes perfect

First come the fingers, then the cutlery – Your child loves eating unassisted. He or she will smell, taste and touch the food to discover what it's like. So spilling, splashing and spitting are just as much a part of it as having fun, feeling at ease, and satisfying one's hunger. Be patient, even if things get spilled!



Checklist for unassisted eating

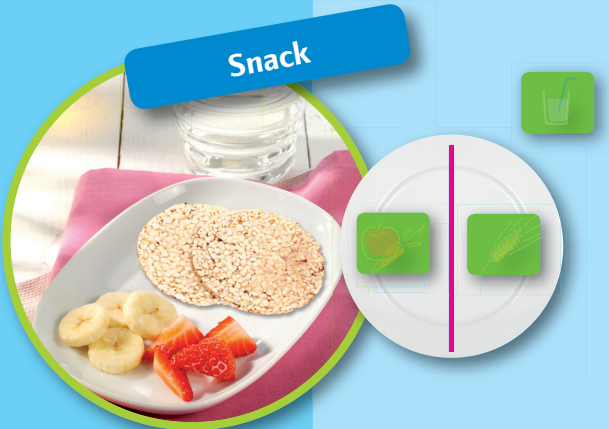
- ✓ A stable high seat, perhaps with a little tray
- ✓ A robust, heavy bowl with a high, straight edge
- ✓ A glass or a cup
- ✓ Children's cutlery with extra-thick handles (alternatively a small spoon or fork)
- ✓ A large bib, perhaps with long sleeves



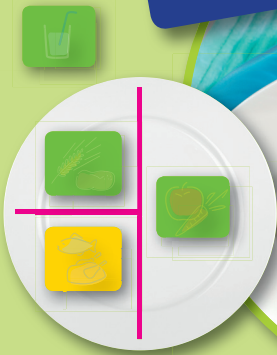
Eat regularly

Define your own family rhythm for mealtimes. Your child will have everything he or she needs for the whole day if you serve 3 main meals and 2 snacks. Drinking is always good with every meal – and you can't beat water.

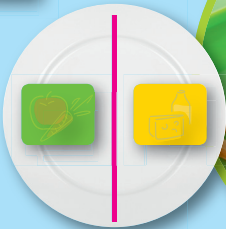
How to spread the meals over the day:



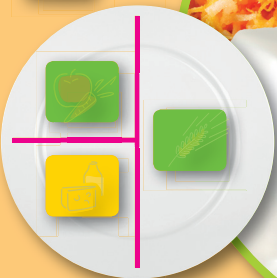
Hot meal



Snack



Cold meal



Picking delicious and nutritious food – here's how it's done!



Bring on the water!

It's always good to drink – around 6 glasses daily.



Mineral or tap water is the best way to quench thirst the zero-calorie way.

You can add a dash of fruit juice to the water if you like, but try to keep it below 1/4 juice.



Instant tea, ice tea, lemonade and juice contain a lot of sugar. That's bad for the teeth and makes kids fat.



Every meal a fresh bouquet!

Fresh vegetables, salad and fruit go with any meal. Children like it raw or cooked. Cut the pieces so they are easy to handle, but not too small. That way your child won't choke. By the way: Children who eat plenty of different vegetables early on in life will enjoy them even more when they're older.



Pick whole grain!




Cereals (particularly whole grain) fill you up, and they contain valuable nutrients. They should be included in almost every meal, preferably as: bread, oatmeal, rice, pasta, bulgur or couscous. It's not a cereal, but also popular: potatoes in many different variations, e.g. boiled, mashed or as a gratin.

Tip!

Children are particularly keen on anything they find easy to grasp.



Offer your child a bit of everything:

-  Plenty of fruit & veg, and lots to drink
-  Some meat
-  Only small amounts of fatty and sweet things



Milk makes for strong bones!

Just like yoghurt, quark, cheese or sour milk. Milk (products) should be on the menu 3 x per day! It depends on what your child enjoys, but preferably on their own – without sugar or cocoa.



A little fish or meat

Fish and meat are particularly rich in nutrients. So feel free to serve small portions in alternation. They are best when tender and free of bones. Up to three meat dishes per week are enough. It's also good to serve your child fish once or twice a week.



Make sure you always cook your meat and fish thoroughly.



Use vegetable oil in moderation

Use vegetable oil (e.g. canola oil) to prepare your meals. 2 tablespoons per day are enough.



The best time to snack is straight after meals

Your child will not miss sweets if he or she has never had any. But once he or she has picked up the taste you can give him or her something sweet once a day – but make sure it's straight after a meal. Sweets are not meant to comfort, calm, or occupy your child.





Romping and resting

Child's play, every day

Crawling, running, jumping, climbing – children love to be active. And that's precisely the way they should be to ensure healthy development. You can help by giving your child space to play – after all, exercise is good for everyone.

- Your child will become more confident the more he or she exercises and plays. This is particularly helpful when trying out new things.
- Your child will be brimming with pride when he or she learns how to walk. But from then on you should walk places instead of going by buggy or car!
- Your child will enjoy riding his or her bike or pushing the buggy. These things also make long walks more interesting.
- The town park, playgrounds, forests and fields provide plenty of space to play in and run around. So get out and about – if possible once a day!

Tip!

Let your child help around the house, for instance when setting the table or fetching something in the garden. Your child will then very naturally get some exercise.

But watch out for: road traffic, garden ponds and steep staircases. They can be dangerous for young children. Make sure your environment is safe for children to play about in.



*Practice makes perfect.
Be confident that your child will cope – fathers are usually the more laid-back companions.*

Plan your breaks

Every child is different in this respect. Some will cling tenaciously to their afternoon nap, while others will only need a few snuggly moments before they are raring to go again.

Give your child the breaks he or she needs to wind down. A quiet cuddle corner, rituals (e.g. reading a bedtime story) and as much daily routine as possible will help your child come to rest. Computer screens and television sets are not the right places for this.



Each child sleeps differently



Whether it is 10 or 14 hours – how much sleep he or she really needs depends from child to child.

Ask your paediatrician if you feel your child is not sleeping enough, or perhaps even too much.

Don't cram your day full of activities

You don't always need an itinerary. Even if your child gets bored, stay calm, and give him or her time to come up with his or her own ideas for what to do.



Frequently asked questions



Is my child too fat/too thin?

Weight and height do not always develop at the same pace. Sometimes children tend to grow stocky, and at other times they gain in height. Simply attend the medical check-ups at your paediatrician's to gain peace of mind.

Which foods are taboo for young children?

Your child can eat almost everything you do, apart from:

- Very small fruit like blueberries, grapes with pips, raisins or nuts. They might cause your child to choke!
- Raw animal products such as uncooked meat, uncooked sausage, unpasteurised milk (cheese), raw eggs or uncooked fish. They may sometimes contain dangerous bacteria; this is why you must only serve animal products and dishes containing animal products that have been thoroughly cooked.
- Raw sprouts or frozen berries that have not been reheated. They may contain dangerous bacteria. Be careful to heat them thoroughly before serving.

Does my child really need meat?

You can also serve your child an entirely vegetarian diet without meat, provided he or she receives milk, dairy products and eggs.



It is not advisable to give a young child a vegan diet entirely without animal products. It is difficult to replace important nutrients found in animal products. Your child may not receive all the nutrients he or she needs, which can cause serious harm. A vegan diet may only be given under medical supervision, and it must include certain dietary supplements.

Do children need hot meals?

Temperature is not important; it's a question of variety. Sometimes you can serve cheese sandwiches, other times pasta with sauce. Some food tastes better hot. But it doesn't matter whether your child eats a hot meal for lunch or dinner.



Does my child have a food allergy?

It doesn't have to be an allergy just because your child has difficulty stomaching certain meals or the ingredients they contain. It's not the right solution to simply leave out one type of food; it may contain important nutrients your child needs to grow. Make sure you ask your paediatrician. He or she can tell you why your child may be feeling queasy (see Recommended Reading on Page 15).

How can I wean my child off the bottle?

- Pick a quiet, calm moment.
- Forget to pack the bottle when you go on excursions.
- Reduce the frequency at which the bottle is offered, and keep it short. And try not to use it to help your child fall asleep or as a pacifier.
- Stick to your guns: once it's gone, it's gone for good.



Make things easy for yourself!

No time to cook?

There's a good range of convenience products to pick from. It's not hard to add some snazz to frozen pizza, pea soup, fish fingers and tortellini with your own fresh and low-fat ingredients. Simply place a bowl with chopped cucumber, peppers or tomato on the table.



Do you have leftover potatoes, pasta or rice? They'll keep a day in the fridge, and you can use them to make salads, casseroles and other tasty dishes. This saves time.

You can reheat yesterday's leftovers for young children. But leave them to cool straight after cooking. Then keep them in the fridge, and heat them up again the next day.

Eating as a family is good for everyone

A balanced and varied family meal (see Pages 8 and 9) will give your child everything he or she needs.



Guidance and assistance



Personal counselling

■ Addresses of nutritional experts close to you

www.vdoe.de, www.vdd.de, www.dge.de,
www.quetheb.de

Recommended Reading

■ Das beste Essen für Kleinkinder (The Best Diet for Young Children) – aid/MLR

Order no. 1566, www.aid-medienshop.de, €2.50 plus shipping

■ German Society of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine

– Information for parents (in German):
www.dgkj.de/eltern/dgkj_elterninformationen/

■ Empfehlungen für die Ernährung von Kindern und Jugendlichen (Recommended Diets for Children and Adolescents) – FKE, www.fke-shop.de, €4.00

For other counselling services, please visit:

www.gesund-ins-leben.de



Gesund ins Leben
Netzwerk Junge Familie

IN FORM is Germany's initiative for healthy eating and more exercise. It was launched in 2008 by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) and the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG), and has since cooperated with its project partners across Germany to positively influence all areas of life. The aim is to sustainably improve dietary and exercise patterns among the population. Visit www.in-form.de for more information.

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