

8 PILLARS OF FEEDING YOUR 1-YEAR-OLD RIGHT

The [baby development process](#) doesn't stop once your child turns a year old. When your child turns one, he will experience milestones that will have profound effects on his healthy growth and progress.

As a parent, you have the important job of continuously supporting your one-year-old child's normal growth and development. You can do this by following the fundamental set of principles that will lay the groundwork for his healthy diet.

1. Regularly introduce new foods to your toddler

At this age, your child will already have a list of favorite foods which will certainly be part of his weekly meal and snack plan. As a parent, your job is to **continue introducing new foods to your toddler**.

Regularly introduce new flavors and textures to your child. Keep in mind that food preferences are set early in life and doing this will help your child develop a taste for healthy foods now. This will also help you **avoid raising a picky eater in the future**.

2. Encourage independence during feeding times

Your toddler will continue to explore self-feeding when he turns one and beyond. **Allow him to discover different foods and textures with his fingers and utensils**. Although this may be messier, especially when compared to spoon-feeding your child, you will **set the foundation for his self-feeding skills**.

Give your toddler opportunities to practice these skills. However, if your child is getting frustrated, step in and lend a hand.

3. Supervise your toddler during meal and snack times

Make sure your toddler eats only while seated and when there is an adult around. This is because your one-year-old will still be playful; he may want to run while holding a fork or even talk with his mouth full of food.

To prevent your child from choking or getting hurt while eating, make sure you (or any adult) is always around during meal and snack times. Instruct your child to remain seated while eating as well. Also, don't forget to teach your child to finish a mouthful before speaking.

4. Give your toddler small, frequent meals every day

Instead of giving your child three square meals daily, give him six small meals throughout the day. According to [nutrition advisors](#), **one-year-old kids require about 1,000 calories divided among three meals and two snacks each day to meet their needs for energy, growth, and good nutrition**.

Don't expect your toddler to always follow this principle, though. Their eating habits are erratic and unpredictable and as such, you need to be flexible as well. But as much as possible, make sure you spread their calorie intake throughout the day.

5. Let your child decide how much to eat

Force-feeding your child is a big no-no. **Toddlers want to have some sense of control, especially during mealtimes**. You can allow your child to feel this by allowing him to decide how much food he should eat.

If you are having a hard time getting your child to eat more fruits and veggies, especially ones he's never tasted before, **serve these foods in fun ways**. By doing so, he'll be interested to eat more. For instance, cut fruits and vegetables into fun shapes by using cookie cutters. Serve fresh fruits and veggies with an assortment of dips and let him experiment with different flavors until he finds one (or more) that he really likes.

6. Avoid giving your child foods that are heavily spiced or flavored

Don't give your toddler heavily salted, spiced, buttered, or sweetened foods. Foods laden with artificial flavors or additives are harmful to your child's health. In addition, if you keep serving your child heavily spiced or flavored dishes and snacks, **you prevent him from enjoying the natural taste of foods**.

7. Be mindful of edible choking hazards

Toddlers are prone to choking on chunks of foods. This is because **children don't learn to chew with a grinding motion until they reach the age of four**. As such, make sure anything you give your toddler is mashed or cut into bite-size, easily chewable pieces.

Some of the foods you should never give a one-year-old include:

- Whole grapes
- Peanuts
- Whole cherry tomatoes
- Dried or processed pumpkin and sunflower seeds and other small, edible seeds
- Hard and gummy candies
- Whole hot dogs
- Whole carrots

8. Continue giving your child milk

Lastly, milk should continue to be a part of your toddler's daily diet. Whether you are breastfeeding or bottle feeding your child (or both), **continue doing so to ensure he gets the right amount of calcium and vitamin D – nutrients he needs to build strong bones**.

In addition, milk contains the right amount of dietary fats toddlers need for normal growth and brain development.

You can **introduce the use of sippy cups to your toddler between the age of 12 and 18 months**. When you teach your child how to use a sippy cup, you let him know that he can drink milk (and other beverages) from another container. This will help you have an easier time weaning him from breastfeeding or bottle feeding or both.

References:

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/feed12yr.html>

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