



# Healthy eating for 1 to 4 year olds

Children aged 1 to 4 years old have small tummies but they have high nutritional needs. They grow and develop quickly and need nourishing food to give them energy, protein and other nutrients.



**Good eating habits started early in life can last a lifetime. These tips provide practical advice for everyday life.**

## Healthy eating habits can last a lifetime

This age is the perfect age to teach your child healthy eating habits for life. Lead by example. If you eat a variety of healthy food your child will be more likely to do the same.



## Small tummies need small servings

1 to 4 year old children have small tummies. They can only eat small amounts. Offer them 3 meals and 2 to 3 healthy snacks every day. All their food and drink needs to be nourishing.



## Portion size matters

Be guided by your child's appetite. Use it to help you decide how much food to offer them. Follow the Children's Food Pyramid guide to servings for portion sizes.



## Limit 'treat' foods

Foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt can be linked to being overweight in childhood. If you decide to give your child these foods offer them in TINY amounts and only once a week.



## Offer water and milk as drinks

Avoid sugary drinks like some cordials and fizzy drinks. Sugary drinks are not good for your child's teeth.



## Milk is a key food

Milk is a key food in the diets of 1 to 4 year old children. Offer your child three servings of milk, yogurt or cheese every day.



## Have a regular daily routine

Having regular times for meals and snacks sets up healthy eating habits for life. Start every day with a healthy breakfast



## More vitamin D needed in winter months

Young children don't get enough vitamin D in winter. They need to take 5 micrograms (5µg) vitamin D only drops or liquid every day from Halloween (31<sup>st</sup> October) to St Patrick's Day (17<sup>th</sup> March).



## Make sure your child gets enough iron

Offer your child red meat three times a week and choose breakfast cereals with added iron (12mg/100g) most days of the week. 1 to 3 year olds who are small for their age may need extra iron so talk to a health professional for advice.