



12-24 Month Feeding Guidelines

INTRODUCTION: Your child is entering the toddler phase of childhood (1-3 years of age). This developmental period is characterized by fierce independence and at times oppositional behavior. During toddler hood the rapid growth of infancy slows and the child's appetite decreases. Often toddlers would much rather play than eat. When they finally want to eat they may be interested at staying at the table for only 5-10 minutes. When they are done eating they will play with or throw their food. Some children will ask to be let down from the table after a short period of eating and in general it is wise to accede to these requests. Eating and feeding can become troublesome for the parents of a toddler. Toddlers often exhibit their most fierce independence at mealtimes partly because they feel a strong sense of power when they either refuse a food or demand a favorite snack. Young children's stomachs have a limited capacity for food so children frequently need to eat between meals in order to consume an adequate amount of calories. It is not unusual for a young child to refuse new foods initially but then accept them after a period of repeated presentation.

12-15 Months:

Developmentally: Child will walk with help, handles bite sized foods and is learning to use a spoon, using a sipper cup primarily and only rarely using a bottle. Children in this age group will often show an interest in feeding themselves.

Feedings: Three meals/day are recommended plus snack (perhaps either mid-afternoon or after dinner). We would like to begin to increase the texture of foods at this age. Introduction of "Graduate" foods at this age group is appropriate. We can transition to whole milk at this age, assuming that the child has no history of milk protein sensitivity/allergy. Often times, the transition to whole milk will necessitate mixing the formula with the whole milk (in a 50/50 ratio) for a short period of time to allow the child to become comfortable with the new taste of milk. Try to provide a variety of fruits, vegetables, and meats at this age. We recommend that the child continue to avoid peanuts, grapes, peanut butter, shellfish, hotdogs, pop-corn and cold cuts.

15-18 Months:

Developmentally: Child is more successful at using a spoon and a cup. At this age the child can drink all liquids from a sipper cup. Mealtimes may be haphazard and brief as the child may lose interest in the meal after 5-10 minutes. The child may show more independence and is becoming quite adept at handling finger foods that are easy for little hands to grasp. Children in this age group will spill liquids from a cup without a lid however we do encourage that supervised introduction of a regular cup at this age. The child may throw food when finished eating.

Feedings: Three meals/day are recommended plus snack. Continue the child on whole milk. Textures of food should be essentially full at this time, while being cautious to be certain that foods are presented in a small enough portion size for the child. Continue to be cautious with foods that would be considered a choking hazard. We will continue to avoid peanuts, peanut butter, shellfish, hot dogs, pop-corn and cold cuts.

18-24 Months:

Developmentally: Children in this age group may use both a spoon and fork (under supervision). Meal times may be somewhat more regular and more consistently at a table.

Feedings: Three meals/day are recommended plus snack. Continue the child on whole milk until 24 months birthday. After 2 years of age we will transition to 2% milk. The child should be eating mealtimes along with the parents on a more consistent basis. We will continue to avoid peanuts, peanut butter, shellfish, hot-dogs, pop-corn and cold cuts. After 2 years of age we may introduce peanut butter.