



March is Nutrition Month. This issue is packed full of information from our registered dietitians on feeding your little one. Read on for tips on introducing solid foods, responding to food refusal, suggestions for iron rich foods and family meal-time stress busters.

The National Theme for 2017's Nutrition Month is "Take the Fight out of Food" . You can find more information by visiting www.NutritionMonth2017.ca. Also check out the [Picky Eating Fact Sheet](#).

Got questions about nutrition? Registered dietitians are available to answer your questions. Simply call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a dietitian.

March 2017

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FAMILY MEAL-TIME STRESS BUSTERS

Let's face it. Eating with a toddler can be stressful, especially at dinner time. Even though spilling and throwing food, picky eating, and crankiness are all normal, they can be hard to face each evening. But, your toddler benefits so much from eating with you, it is worth it to find ways to create happy and stress-free mealtimes.

Where to start?

Move your focus from what your child is eating to simply enjoying each other's company. It is amazing how much stress is lifted when you let go of being concerned about how much or what your child will eat.



Plan for early dinners. Toddlers can be ticking time bombs after 5 p.m. If dinner is running late, offer a light pre-dinner snack to prevent your toddler from becoming overhungry.

Involve your toddler in the dinner conversation; keep it fun.

Keep distractions at a minimum. Turn off the TV and cell phone. Don't allow toys at the table.

Expect a mess and have wipes handy to catch large spills. Pick up food that has dropped on the floor after the meal is over. Practice the Division of Responsibility with feeding:

- Introduce new foods along with familiar, loved foods. This will help your child feel comfortable at meal times.
- Do not coax or bribe your child to try new foods or to eat certain amounts. Let your child decide what and how much to eat from the foods that are offered. Let your baby feed themselves as much as possible, with fingers or spoon.
- Feel good about achieving your main job which is preparing the meal and serving it at a scheduled time. Once the meal is served, focus on your own eating, not your toddlers.

For more information visit:

[Ellyn Satter Institute](#)
[Healthy Families BC](#)

DEALING WITH FOOD REFUSAL

If you've ever found yourself saying "my baby tried broccoli and does not like it", you are not alone.

Refusal to eat new foods like broccoli is normal toddler behaviour and part of learning to eat. The good news is it doesn't mean your child will never like broccoli.

It can take many exposures (some say up to 20 or more) before babies and toddlers feel ready to accept and eat a new food. Picking up the food, squishing it, tasting it and spitting it out are all typical ways toddlers learn about and accept new foods.

It is important to stay positive. Here are a few tips:

Talk about what is happening. Try saying something like "That is called broccoli, you tried it and it has a different taste doesn't it?"

Set a great example. Let your child see you enjoying vegetables.

Continue to offer the new food. Offer broccoli (and other new foods) in calm, no pressure manner. At future meals when broccoli is on the menu, keep offering it to your toddler. Try putting another piece of broccoli in front of her and saying "see what you think" without any pressure.

Get creative: Try preparing the food in different ways.

Avoid coaxing, bribing, tricking. Pressure from adults to eat certain foods or amounts slows done



the process and often makes food refusal worse. Toddlers can smell an agenda a mile away!

For more information on the how to feed toddlers see www.ellynsatterinstitute.org

INTRODUCING SOLID FOODS

Baby's first food is a very exciting time. Get the camera ready to capture those funny faces and messy hands!

Like all new things, parents often wonder where to start. Here are some common questions and answers.

How do I know when my baby is ready for solid foods?

Your baby is ready at about six months and when he or she:

- sits, leans forward and holds her head up
- watches and opens her mouth for the spoon
- does not always push food out of her mouth with her tongue
- can turn head away to let you know when she doesn't want to be fed
- can pick food up and bring it to her mouth

What food is best to start with?

Start with high iron foods like well-cooked, finely minced or tender pieces of meat, poultry or fish, iron-fortified infant cereal, cooked egg, lentils, beans or tofu. Next you can begin to offer vegetables, fruit, cheese and plain yogurt, and a variety of whole grains.

Try a variety of textures: smooth, mashed, lumpy, tender cooked, minced, and soft finger foods, starting at six months of age.

Continue to offer high iron foods at least twice a day.

How should I offer solid food to my baby?

Choose a time when your baby is content, interested and alert. You can offer food by spoon or you can place food on your baby's tray to explore with her palms and fingers at her own pace. When using a spoon hold it so your baby can see it. Let her touch the spoon and help guide it to her mouth. Babies love to feed themselves at their own pace, using their fingers and hands. They make a mess feeding themselves, but this is an important part of learning to eat.

For more information on feeding babies solid foods see:

www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca
www.healthlinkbc.ca



BRING ON THE IRON!

Iron is an important nutrient for supporting your baby's brain development and healthy growth. By about six months of age, your baby's iron stores from birth will run out, and he/she will need to start getting iron from food. To help your baby get the iron he/she needs, offer iron rich foods two or more times a day.

Iron found in meats, poultry and fish is best. Other good sources include iron fortified baby cereal, cooked egg yolk, lentils, beans and tofu. Serve with fruits and vegetables that have vitamin C such as berries, applesauce, orange pieces, steamed broccoli, and cooked diced red peppers.

Snack times provide a great opportunity to boost the number and amount of iron-rich choices offered. Here are some ideas to try:

- Pancakes or muffins made with iron fortified infant cereal (for the recipe visit www.healthlinkbc.ca)
- Hummus made from chick peas
- Bean dip
- Baked or stir fried tofu cubes (made with extra firm tofu)
- Thin strips of leftover moist meats
- Lentil cookies or muffins (for the recipe visit www.lentils.org)
- French toast strips
- Hard-boiled egg



Sources and where to get more info

[Interior Health - Search for Health Centres under "location type"](#)
[Interior Health](#)
[HealthLink BC](#)
[HealthyFamilies BC](#)
[Ellyn Satter Institute](#)
[NutritionMonth2017.ca](#)

This e-newsletter is an Interior Health project to provide quick and easy health tips for new parents and caregivers of children ages 0 to 2 years. Your comments and topic suggestions are welcome! Simply email us at: healthmatters@interiorhealth.ca.

For more info or to attend a free child health clinic, contact your local Public Health Centre. You can find contact info online at: www.interiorhealth.ca or look it up under Interior Health in the blue

pages of your local phone book.

Sincerely,
Interior Health Authority

