



September is here and that means back to our regular routines including work, child care and school. All the hustle and bustle of summer vacation and out-of-town visitors - not mention the threat of this summer's wildfires can wreak havoc with your child's sleep schedule, making returning to a regular routine challenging. Check out our first article for some tips to help your toddler develop a sleep routine.

If your regular routine involves packing snacks and lunches for child care, we have some ideas in our second article to make this task easier and healthier.

Speaking of lunch and snacks, if you are one of the many parents who aren't sure if and when it's ok to introduce peanut butter to babies - you may find our third article helpful.

Last but not least, as you are preparing your to-do lists for getting back to routine - don't forget to check your child's immunization schedule. Find out what to look for in our final article.

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HELPING YOUR TODDLER SLEEP WELL

Routines give toddlers a sense of safety and security and they also can help toddlers develop good sleep habits. Here are some tips to help develop a sleep routine in your home.

During the day:

Nap time: Try to keep a regular nap schedule even on weekends and days off. When naps are missed it can be harder for children to settle at night.



Snack and meal time: Hungry, cranky toddlers do not sleep well. Offering meals and snacks at regular times during the day helps keep hunger at bay and it helps children get used to other routines.

At night:

Wind down time: Slow down the activity level before bed time by giving your child a bath, reading together and cuddling. Avoid TV right before bed as this can be too stimulating.

One to one time: Make bed time special by having one to one time with your toddler to talk about their day.

Offer choices: Let your toddler be a part of the routine by offering choices about what story to read or which pajamas to wear.

Offer a kiss and a sleep time saying: As your child settles give him a kiss and say something that tells him it is time to sleep "goodnight - sleep tight", "now it's time to sleep", "have a good sleep" are just a few examples.

There will be times when your toddler has a hard time settling down at night. There are several things that can cause sleeping problems. Stress from being overtired, falling out of routine, or fear of the dark can all interfere with sleep. When this happens your child may need a little more help to settle. Try these ideas:

Don't sneak out. Instead, try patting him gently, singing a quiet song over and over, playing some relaxing quiet music and staying close by. When he is settling, say "goodnight" and then leave.

Make sleep time your relaxation time: Sit in a chair close by and read, listen to music, or just relax. Over a few days, move the chair farther and farther away until he is more independent.

Let in some light: If he seems afraid of the dark or is just more comfortable with some light, plug in a nightlight or leave the door open and turn on a light outside the room.

For more ideas on helping children sleep well read [Toddlers First Steps](#) pages 81-85.

PACKING FOOD FOR CHILD CARE

Looking for ideas and tips on packing lunches for child care? Checking your daycare's food guidelines is a great place to start. Licensed child care facilities are required to promote healthy eating and make sure children have healthy food and drink. Typically they will ask you to pack lunch and snack choices from the four food groups in [Canada's Food Guide](#). Daycare guidelines will also tell you if there are any foods that are not allowed and if there are children who have severe food allergies.



It can be challenging to pack healthy lunches that your child will enjoy. Here are some tips to help make it easier and to add variety:

- Invest in the right 'gear' such as reusable containers, an insulated lunch bag, small freezer packs, and leak proof drink containers.
- Instead of offering only one item for the main lunch meal (half a sandwich) try a mix of choices such as a quarter of a sandwich with hummus and veggies.
- Mix things up. Try tortilla wraps, pasta salads, bean dips, quesadilla, grilled cheese, tuna

- melts, drumsticks, scrambled egg, mini quiches. The options are endless!
- Plan for leftovers. Make extra stew, chilli, soups and casseroles that can be frozen into individual portions and then easily thawed.

Snacks help fuel busy brains and bodies. The number of snacks to include in a packed lunch will depend on how long your child will be at daycare. For full days, you will typically need to pack two snacks - one for mid-morning and one for mid-afternoon.

Smart snacks have at least two food groups: 1) a veggie or fruit choice most of the time, OR a grain choice, and 2) a little protein or healthy fat for longer lasting energy (such as avocado, beans, egg, seed/nut butters, cheese, and yogurt). Here are some quick examples:

- Tender broccoli pieces and hummus dip
- Banana bread thinly spread with nut or seed butter
- Fruit pieces mixed in plain yogurt

Read labels of packaged snacks carefully. Many products that look healthy in photos can be high in added sugars, salt or processed fats. Examples of healthier packaged items include unsweetened applesauce/fruit cups, cheese strings, yogurt cups/tubes, graham wafers and fig bars.

For more information:

[Meal and Snack Ideas for Your 1-3 Year Old Child](#)

[Pack and Go Lunches](#)

[Pack and Go Snacks](#)

Also check out these great [videos](#) on packing lunches. Note that some of the examples listed in these resources will need to be adapted to prevent choking in young children. For more information see the HealthLink file [Prevent Choking in Young Children](#).

IF YOU ENJOY PEANUT BUTTER - YOUR BABY CAN TOO!

YES it's true! Delaying the introduction of peanut is no longer recommended. In fact, all common food allergens, (including: peanut, tree nuts (i.e. walnuts, almonds, cashews), egg, milk products (i.e. yogurt and cheese), wheat, sesame, soy and seafood) can be introduced starting at about six months of age when your baby is ready for solid foods.

There is no benefit to delaying the introduction of these foods and delaying may actually increase the risk of food allergies. This is especially true for peanut and egg. Your baby can enjoy most of the same foods as the rest of the family and that makes family mealtimes easier and fun.



Consider the following when introducing common food allergens:

1. Your baby's first solid foods should continue to be high iron foods such as meat, meat alternatives and iron fortified infant cereal. Many common food allergens are also good sources of iron such as eggs, fish, and tofu.
2. Modify food textures when needed to reduce risk of choking.
3. When choosing which food allergens to offer first, choose foods your family regularly

enjoys. For example, if peanut butter is a food that your family eats often this would be a great choice to begin with. See below for how you can offer peanut butter safely.

4. Introduce common food allergens one-at-a time.

How can I make peanut butter safe to offer to my baby?

- Add 15 mL (1 Tbsp) warm water to 15 mL (1 Tbsp) smooth peanut butter. Mix until smooth and no lumps. Stir into 30 mL (2 Tbsp) prepared infant cereal, oatmeal, applesauce or other pureed or mashed fruit.

Attention: Parents of babies with severe eczema or egg allergy

Talk to your doctor early on about the best time to offer peanut to your baby. A referral to a pediatric allergist may be recommended before offering peanut to your baby.

For information on reducing risk of food allergy in babies see this [health file](#).

If you have questions or concerns about offering peanut and other food allergens to your baby, call Dietitian Services at HealthLinkBC by dialing 8-1-1 and asking to speak with the allergy dietitian.

TIME TO CHECK IMMUNIZATIONS

Lunch kit - check! Water bottle - check! Indoor shoes - check! Immunizations...?

Whether your kids are going back to school, going to child care or just getting back into fall routine, now is the perfect time to make sure their immunizations are up to date.

The timing of immunizations is important. [B.C.'s routine vaccination schedules](#) identify key times for vaccinations and boosters. There are schedules for infants and pre-schoolers, for school-age children and for adults.



Vaccines are the best way to protect children against serious and sometimes fatal diseases. Vaccines, even combined doses, are safe. Side effects are only minor, if any. It's much safer to get the vaccine than to get the disease.

Information about accessing immunization records can be found at [ImmunizeBC](#).

NEWS YOU CAN USE



[Air quality and your health](#)

Residents in communities affected by wildfires and resulting smoky skies should be aware that smoke conditions and local air quality can change due to the unpredictable nature of wildfires.

Sources and where to get more info

[Interior Health - Search for Health Centres under "location type"](#)

[Interior Health](#)

[HealthLinkBC](#)

[ImmunizeBC](#)

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

