

Milk and Toddlers

This pamphlet applies to children 6 months to 3 years of age.

Toddlers are more independent and are not as hungry as when they were babies. They often refuse to eat and drink what is given to them. This behaviour is normal, but sometimes results in the problems shown below:

Some toddlers drink so much milk that they are too full to eat any other foods.

Young children cannot grow and develop properly on just milk. Milk does not have much iron. Toddlers who drink lots of milk and do not eat enough food will not get enough iron. This can make the child anemic and can affect the child's normal physical development and learning ability. Even when they look chubby they may not be healthy.

Babies need foods other than milk from about 6 months of age. Between 6 and 12 months, children need to increase the variety of foods they eat.

I like drinking milk, lots of MILK!



Getting a toddler to sleep can be very hard. Many families give children bottles to help them to go to sleep. If the child falls asleep while sucking, the drink stays in the mouth for too long and can cause tooth decay and ear infections.

A toddler's teeth can be easily damaged by all milks, fruit juices, cordials and soft drinks. Plain water does not damage teeth.

Milk that stays in the child's mouth for long periods of time can go up the narrow tube leading to the middle ear. This can cause an ear infection.

The best way to feed toddlers food or drink is while they are sitting upright. Never leave them to fall asleep with a bottle.

I'm not sleeping without my bottle!



Note: Breast milk or infant formula are the recommended types of milk for children under 12 months of age. Cow's milk can be introduced after 12 months.

For more information on introducing solids ask for the pamphlet called "Starting solids".

For further information contact your local child and family health nurse or your doctor.

I can't chew.
I haven't got
enough teeth.



Toddlers can eat most family foods even when they don't have their teeth!

Some foods may need to be cut up finely, but children **are** able to chew food with their gums.

To get enough iron babies need to start eating foods such as baby cereals and meats from about 6 months of age. The best sources of iron are meat and meat alternatives.

By 12 months of age they should be eating foods from each of these groups:

- Breads and cereals (eg. rice cereal, bread, rice, pasta)
- Fruits (eg. banana, steamed pear, steamed apple)
- Vegetables (eg. spinach, green leafy vegetables, carrots, pumpkin)
- Meats and meat alternatives (eg. chicken, beef, lamb, fish, lentils, beans)
- Dairy foods and dairy alternatives (eg. yoghurt, custard, cheese)

I want my
bottle. I
don't like
that cup.



Some toddlers like to drink from a bottle long after they can be taught to drink from a cup.

Babies can be taught to use a cup after 6 months of age. By 12 months they should be able to use a cup by themselves.

It is normal for children at this age to be messy when using a cup. For less mess, use cups with lids and spouts or straws.

After 12 months of age, limit milk and dairy foods to **600mL in 24 hours**. If a child doesn't like to drink milk then other dairy foods such as custard, cheese or yoghurt can be given instead. (200mL milk = 200g yoghurt = 1 slice cheese)