



# 18 month visit



**Enjoy meals together** at a table without electronic devices.

**Children who eat with their families** are less likely to be overweight, eat fewer fried foods, drink less soda, eat more fruits and vegetables, get better grades and are less likely to be involved in drugs and alcohol as teenagers.

**Avoid bribes, pressure, threats, earning dessert, and even praise around eating.** Saying, "If you eat your broccoli you can have a cookie," teaches that one food is more valuable than the other.

**Avoid sugary drinks,** this can lead to cavities and weight gain. Children do not need juice.

**Brush your child's teeth** with a soft toothbrush with a smear of fluorinated toothpaste twice daily.

**Do not let your child eat in the car due to choking risk.**

## Eating Well

**Your child should drink from a cup. Allow your child to feed themselves with child sized spoon and fork.** This will probably be messy, but feeding themselves is important for your child's development.

**Offer new foods at the beginning of a meal.** You may have to offer new foods several times before your child will try it.

**Offer snacks 1½ to 2 hours before a meal** so your child is hungry and more likely to eat when a meal is served.

Snack is a time, not a food group. It should include two food groups and be served in a designated area. Examples; cheese and crackers, yogurt and fruit, cottage cheese and tomatoes, graham crackers with peanut butter.

**Serve milk with meals and water between meals.**

**It is normal for your child's appetite to vary.** Continue to offer a variety of healthy foods and let your child decide how much they will eat.

As a parent, you choose where, what and when your child eats. Allow your child to choose how much or if they will eat. It is normal for your child to skip meals at this age occasionally, continue to offer regular meals. Do not force your child to eat or clean their plate.

Keep meal times pleasant; do not get into power struggles or pressure your child to eat.

Serve the same foods to the entire family. Serve both not-yet-liked with liked foods. Do not make special food or meals for your child.

**Do not use food as a reward, to comfort or entertain.** These can lead to unhealthy habits later in life.

**Plan desserts as part of the meal occasionally.** This is not something that needs to be part of every meal. Limit dessert to one portion and offer it with the rest of the meal. Let your child choose when to eat it.

**Have realistic expectations for how long a child can sit at the table.**

Encourage good table manners; turning down food politely "no thank you," and sitting for five to ten minutes for this age. Do not allow; throwing food, bringing toys to the table or making negative comments about food.

**Be a good role model and eat healthy too.** Eating with your child is important, your child watches how you eat and will model it in time.



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**Offer 3 healthy meals and 2-3 healthy snacks at about the same time each day!**

**Dairy: 2 cups a day.**

*1 cup = 1 cup milk or Other Dairy;  
1 cup yogurt and 1½ ounces of cheese.*

**Vegetables: 1 cup total.**

Fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables throughout the day.

**Fruits: 1 cup total.**

Fresh, frozen, or no sugar added canned throughout the day.

**Whole Grains: 3 ounces a day.**

Bread, cereal, rice and pasta.

*1 ounce = 1 slice of bread,  
½ bun or mini bagel,  
1 cup dried cereal,  
½ cup cooked cereal, rice or pasta.*

**Protein: 2 ounces a day.**

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts.

*1 ounce = 1 ounce of meat,  
poultry or fish, 1 egg,  
¼ cup cooked beans (pinto,  
kidney, black, lima, etc.),  
1 tablespoon peanut butter or  
½ ounce of chopped nuts and seeds.*



## Eating Well CONTINUED

**Sample Meal Pattern**

**BREAKFAST:** 1 ounce Grain; ½ cup Milk;  
½ ounce Protein

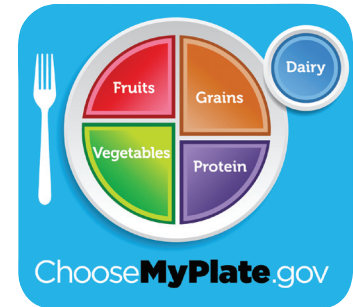
**SNACK:** ½ cup Fruit

**LUNCH:** 1 ounce Grain; ½ cup Vegetable;  
½ ounce Protein; ½ cup Milk

**SNACK:** ½ cup Fruit

**DINNER:** 1 ounce Grain; ½ cup Vegetable;  
½ ounce Protein; ½ cup Milk

**SNACK:** ½ cup Other Dairy



## Be Active

**Movement is important for healthy brain development.** Encourage your child to move every hour. Be active with them.

Your child should have 30 minutes of structured activity (adult led) and 60 minutes to several hours of free play every day.

Children love to throw and kick. Consider a beanbag toss and balls of various sizes.

Children also enjoy rolling on mats and going down small slides.

**Do not put a TV in your child's bedroom.**

Screen time (Computer, cell phone, electronic games, and TV) is not recommended under age 2.

**Include your child on family walks and bike rides.**

**Join a playgroup or participate in a class.**

## Sleep

**Children sleep 12-14 hours in a 24 hour period, including naps of one to three hours.**

Have a regular day and night sleep schedule.

Regular sleep schedules have a positive impact on cognitive development.

**Watching TV or videos before bed can make it harder to take a nap or fall asleep.**

**Keep your child in their crib to sleep unless they are climbing out.**

**Establish a bedtime routine.** For example bath, brush teeth, read a book, tuck into bed.

