

Quick Tips for Healthy Snacking at All Ages

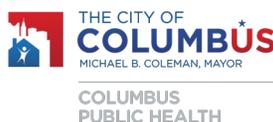
Toddlers

- Belly size of a fist, adults the size of football
- Caregivers should provide structure to their toddler's day, including predictable meal and snack times.
- Most toddlers need three meals and two snacks per day.
- Caregivers should make sure that the feeding environment is safe by having their child seated when it is time to eat.
- At this age, make sure to present food in a form/size that they can handle safely. This means making sure to cut things up in small pieces and avoiding food that might promote choking. It also means avoiding foods that are hard or tough and difficult to chew.
- Make sure that you offer healthy choices at all meals and snacks. Toddlers are unpredictable and you should look at every meal and snack as an opportunity to get healthy, nutritious food into them.
- Don't stop offering a certain food because the last time they didn't like it. Their tastes change over time.
- Sit and eat with your toddler. Toddlers are much more likely to eat and less likely to feel pressure if people around them are also eating.
- Set a good example by demonstrating good table manners and healthy eating habits. If a toddler doesn't see adults, eating vegetables, they are much less likely to try them.
- Accept the mess.
- Don't become a short order cook or you may continue to be one for the rest of your child's life. If your toddler decides not to eat what you offer, that is fine. They can wait until the next meal or snack (when they are good and hungry) to be offered food again.



- Don't allow panhandling for food between scheduled meal and snack times. If you do, you will sabotage your own meal and snack structure.
- Water is all that they should be offered between meals and snacks. This is also important for dental health.
- Turn off any distractions (TV, DVDs, smart phones etc.). Help your toddler learn to pay attention to her eating and hunger. Mealtime is family social time.
- Teach counting while snacking you can use their age as a guideline for skills and portion control - for example, a 3-year-old child can be allowed three animal crackers, sliced grapes etc.
- Repeatedly offer infants and toddlers foods that are naturally low in salt and added sugars, as well as fruits and vegetables without added sugar, salt or sauces, as often as possible.

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