

Feeding young children during COVID-19

What you need to know

Proper nutrition is vital in the first two years of a child's life. It supports their healthy growth and development, strengthens their immune system, and reduces their risk of getting ill with infectious and chronic diseases.



Give your child fresh and unprocessed food such as dark green leafy vegetables, orange/yellow coloured fruit and vegetables, legumes (e.g. lentils, beans), nuts and whole grains (e.g. unprocessed maize, millet, oats, wheat, brown rice or starchy tubers or roots such as potatoes), and proteins (e.g. meat, fish, eggs, milk).



Make sure your child has 8–10 cups of water every day. You can also give them other drinks (e.g. unsweetened milk), and fruit and vegetables that contain water (e.g. cucumber, tomatoes, spinach, mushroom, melon, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, oranges, apples, blueberries), but water is the best choice.



Make sure your child eats healthy fats found in white meat (e.g. poultry), fish, avocado, nuts, olive oil, soy, canola, sunflower and corn oils. Do not give them processed food, processed meats, fast food, snack food, fried food, frozen pizza, pies, cookies, margarines and spreads.



Limit your child's salt intake. Limit the amount of salt you use daily to less than 5 g (approximately 1 teaspoon), and use iodized salt. Do not give them snacks that are high in salt.



Give your child fresh fruit, not sweet snacks. Do not give them snacks, soft drinks or sodas and other drinks that are high in sugar (e.g. fruit juices, fruit juice concentrates and syrups, flavoured milks, yogurt drinks). Fresh fruit is the best choice for them, not sweet snacks (e.g. cookies, cake, chocolate).



Cook at home. Taking children to eat out during this COVID-19 pandemic increases their contact with other people and their chance of being exposed to the virus. So home-cooked food is the best choice, and is healthier and more nutritious for them than calorie-filled food from outside the home.



Reach out for help. During this COVID-19 pandemic, it may be harder to get nutritious food at home because of lockdowns, and there may be increased demands on parents and caregivers. If you feel overwhelmed, seek help from trained professionals and through other trusted sources (e.g. digital, social, print, broadcast).



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