



Tips to Give Infants and Toddlers a Nutritious Start

Six Findings from the Nestlé Feeding Infants and Toddlers Study (FITS)



The Nestlé Feeding Infants and Toddlers Study (FITS) is the largest dietary intake study in the United States focused on what and how children under the age of 4 eat. The latest findings help uncover some areas where we can improve young children's diets.

FITS FINDING

Nearly 1 in 5

infants 6-12 months fall short on iron in their diet—Iron is a key nutrient for brain development and learning. ➔



TRY THIS

Start (and stay) with iron-rich foods

- ✓ Iron is found in red meat, beans and iron-fortified infant cereal.
- ✓ Iron-fortified infant cereal is the long-standing leading food source of iron for babies. Try it in a variety of grains, including oat and wheat.

More than a quarter

of children ages 6 months to four years do not eat a single vegetable on a given day. Of toddlers who do, French fries are the most common choice. ➔



Offer a rainbow of veggies

- ✓ For infants: include pureed or mashed peas, sweet potatoes, carrots, butternut squash, and green beans.
- ✓ For toddlers and preschoolers: consider mashed or small, soft cooked dices of sweet potatoes, peas, green beans, carrots, red peppers or zucchini.
- ✓ Finger foods including red/green pepper slices, cooked peas and cucumber slices can spark some kid-friendly creativity.
- ✓ Try double dipping – dip soft bite-sized veggies in veggies – like mild salsas or guacamole, or try a bean dip or hummus.

More than 4 in 10

young children do not eat whole grains on a given day. Including whole grains as part of a healthy diet may help with weight management and reduce the risk of heart disease. ➔



Choose whole grain foods kids love

- ✓ Aim to make half of your grains whole grains.
- ✓ Look for whole grain infant cereals, breads, rice and pasta to help children develop a love for whole grains.
- ✓ Aim for whole grains at snack time. Cereals, bars and crackers can all provide whole grains.

After their first birthday,

fewer toddlers meet their recommended nutrient needs. ➔



Make this milestone count

- ✔ A child's first birthday is often a milestone for incorporating more foods from the family table.
- ✔ Build on the wins you achieved with baby food, like getting them to eat a variety of veggies, and now try incorporating these familiar foods into your favorite family recipes.

20% of young children

do not drink milk on a given day, which provides essential calcium and vitamin D—important for developing strong bones. ➔



Boost dairy in your child's diet

- ✔ Serve milk with meals.
- ✔ Pack a yogurt for on-the-go goodness.
- ✔ Add a slice of cheese to sandwiches.

Almost all (90% of)

preschoolers eat sweets, including desserts or sugar-sweetened beverages on a given day. ➔



Take advantage of children's preference for sweet foods

- ✔ Offer fruit at meals and snack time, including fresh, frozen, dried and canned versions.
- ✔ Try yogurt mixed with your child's favorite fruits or whole grain cereal.
- ✔ Get creative with a fruit and yogurt smoothie for a refreshing treat on a hot day.

Looking for More Ideas and Tips?

Gerber's Menu Planner offers personalized and customizable menu options, taking the guesswork out of getting your baby the healthy options they need while saving you time. Find more easy tips at [Gerber.com](https://www.gerber.com). And don't give up! It may take up to 10 tries for your little one to accept a new food.

Background

Nearly 10,000 infants and young children have been part of FITS, which was started by Gerber in 2002, and conducted again in 2008 and 2016. FITS 2016 surveyed parents and caregivers of 3,235 U.S. children under age four, including 1,500 infants. The FITS findings can help parents give young children a healthy start.



Good Food, Good Life

Visit <https://www.gerber.com/why-gerber> for additional information.

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