

DOWN SYNDROME NUTRITION THERAPY

TODDLERS: AGE 1-3

The toddler age group can be a challenging time when it comes to feeding and nutrition. Your child's nutrition during this time is especially important because it's a time of major growth and development. A toddler with Down Syndrome may have developmental delays that make feeding even more challenging. Below are some tips to help make sure they are getting optimal nutrition as they are growing.



NUTRIENT RECOMMENDATIONS

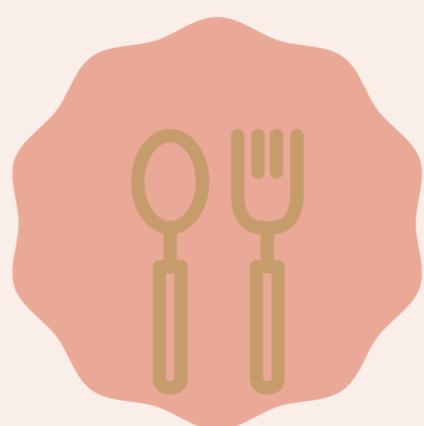
Milk & Milk Products
2-2.5 cups/day

Vegetables & Fruits
2 cups/day

Meat/Other Protein Foods
2 oz/day

Fats & Oils
3 teaspoons/day

Cereal, Bread, Grains, Starches
3 oz/day



FEEDING & MEAL TIME TIPS

Food exposure: Toddlers often require 10-15x of exposure to new foods before they accept it. Do not get discouraged if they don't initially accept a new food. Try this food game with your toddler with new foods!

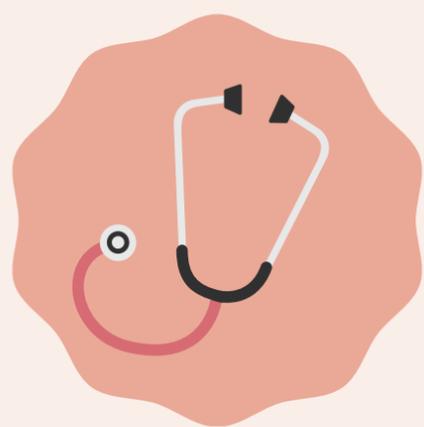
Model healthy eating: Toddlers learn by watching their parents. Be a role model by showing healthy eating habits.

Provide food every 3-4 hours: This helps your toddler's glycemic control and stimulates their natural hunger/satiety cues.

Snacks: Try to always pair a grain with either a protein or a healthy fat. This will keep your toddler full for a longer duration and prevent them from over-snacking. An example: whole-wheat crackers with string cheese or apple slices with peanut butter.



Offer new foods first, then "accepted" foods: Picky eating is common in this age group. Try offering a new fruit or vegetable before offering a familiar food.



COMMON FEEDING ISSUES

Individuals with Down Syndrome often have secondary conditions that can impact their nutrition.

Constipation: Toddlers with Down Syndrome commonly experience constipation due to low muscle tone. Making sure your child stays hydrated and gets enough fiber can help. Fluid: for toddlers up to 10 kg --> 100 mL/kg per day. For toddlers 11-20 kg --> 1000 mL + 50 mL for every kg > 10 kg. Fiber: toddlers 1-3 years should get 19 g of fiber/day.

Reflux: Reflux often occurs in toddlers with Down Syndrome due to low muscle tone of the lower esophageal sphincter, which normally stays closed and prevents stomach acid from entering the esophagus. Keeping your child in an upright position after meals and avoiding spicy or acidic food can help.

Chewing & Swallowing: Chewing and swallowing issues may occur with your toddler due to delayed dental formation and oral motor skills. Consider consulting a Speech Language Pathologist as they specialize in these issues.