



FEEDING INFANTS & TODDLERS IN

Chinese & Vietnamese Communities

These recommendations are based on the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Chapter 2, and tailored to Vietnamese and Chinese families.

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The age of a child from birth to the second birthday is an important time to focus on nutrients and eating behaviors to support healthy growth and development. As children in this age group learn to eat small amounts of food at a time, it's important to make every bite count!

1 For about the first 6 months of life, exclusively feed infants human milk.

Feed infants human milk through at least the first two years of life or longer if desired.

If exclusive human milk feeding is not possible, complement human milk feeding and/or feed infants iron-fortified commercial infant formula during the first year of life.

2 Provide infants with supplemental vitamin D after birth.

Infants who are exclusively or partially fed human milk need to be supplemented with 400 IU vitamin D per day soon after birth.

For infants receiving full feeds of infant formula, vitamin D supplementation is not needed.

3 At about 6 months, introduce infants to age-appropriate nutrient-dense complementary foods to complement human milk or infant formula feedings.

Some infants may show developmental signs of readiness before 6 months, but introducing complementary foods before 4 months is not recommended.



4 Introduce infants to potentially allergenic foods along with other complementary foods.

Allergens include:



Peanuts



Eggs



Cow Milk



Tree nuts



Wheat



Crustacean shellfish



Fish



Soy

Introducing peanut-containing foods in the first year reduces the risk that an infant will develop a food allergy to peanuts. If an infant has severe eczema, egg allergy, or both: age-appropriate, peanut containing foods should be introduced as early as 4-6 months to reduce the risk of developing a peanut allergy.

Note: Check with the infant's healthcare provider before feeding peanut.

Note: Cow milk should only be introduced at 12 months or later.



5 Encourage infants and toddlers to consume a variety of foods from all food groups, including family's traditional foods.

It is important to encourage foods from all food groups to support nutrient adequacy, foster acceptance of healthy foods, and set intakes on a path toward a healthy pattern.

It may take up to 8 to 10 exposures for an infant to accept a new type of food. Repeated exposure to foods increases the likelihood of an infant accepting them.

Many Chinese and Vietnamese families eat “family style” meals, typically with individual bowls of rice and sharing dishes in the center of the table. When setting up at the table, serve dishes from all food groups:

PROTEIN FOODS include meats, poultry, eggs, seafood, nuts, seeds, and soy products. Protein foods are important sources of iron, zinc, protein, choline, and long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids.



Tofu



Salmon



Chicken



Meat



Shrimp



Eggs

VEGETABLES AND FRUITS especially those rich in potassium, vitamin A, and vitamin C.



Banana



Oranges



Apples



Mango



Bok Choy



Cabbage

DAIRY Families can introduce yogurt and cheese, including soy-based yogurt, before 12 months.



Yogurt



Cheese



Soy-based yogurt

Note: Infants should not consume cow milk or fortified soy beverages before the age of 12 months as a replacement for human milk or infant formula.

In the second year of life, dairy products including plain or Vitamin-D fortified milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soy beverages and soy yogurt (without added sugar) can be offered, as they provide a good source of calcium, potassium and vitamin D.

Next Step formulas or “toddler milk” should not be offered as there are no clear needs for those and they typically contain added sugar.

GRAINS include oatmeal, barley, multigrain bread, rice cereal, brown rice, purple rice, buckwheat noodles. Preferably whole grains, and iron-fortified infant cereal.



Oatmeal



Barley



Multigrain Bread



White Rice



Brown rice



Purple rice



Buckwheat noodles



6 Include foods rich in iron and zinc.

IRON-RICH FOODS include beef, pork, chicken, shrimp, beans, organ meats. Iron-fortified infant cereals, such as rice cereal.



Beef



Pork



Chicken



Shrimp



Beans



Organ Meats

Iron supports neurologic development and immune function.

Infants are typically born with body stores of iron adequate for about the first 6 months of life. By age 6 months, however, infants require an external source of iron other than from human milk.

ZINC-RICH FOODS include beef, chicken, shrimp, beans, organ meats. Zinc fortified infant cereals.



Beef



Chicken



Shrimp



Beans



Organ Meats



Infant Cereal

Zinc supports growth and immune function.

7 Avoid foods and beverages with added sugars.

Complementary foods need to be nutrient-dense and not contain additional calories from added sugars.

Low- and no-calorie sweeteners, are not recommended for children under 2 years of age.

Infants and young children may develop preferences for overly sweet foods if very sweet foods are introduced during this time, since taste preferences form at a young age.

Sugar-sweetened beverages (regular soda, juice drinks that aren't 100% fruit juice, sports drinks, and flavored water with sugar) should not be given to children under age 2.

Drinks labeled as fruit drinks or fruit-flavored drinks contain added sugars, and they are not the same as 100% fruit juice.

Examples: Kool Aid, Capri Sun, Gatorade, Sprite, Ramune, Calpico, Yakult.

Plain, fluoridated drinking water can be offered in small amounts (up to 4 to 8 ounces per day) to infants along with the introduction of complementary foods. Intake of plain, fluoridated drinking water can slowly be increased after age 1 to meet hydration and fluoride needs.





8 Limit foods and beverages higher in sodium.

Taste preferences for salty foods may be established early in life.

High sodium can be found in salty snacks, commercial toddler foods, processed meats.

Examples: Spam, soy sauce, fish sauce, instant noodles with seasoning.

Instead: Cook meat with no added salt, low sodium Spam, low sodium soy sauce, diluting soy sauce and fish sauce with water.

Choose fresh foods, low-sodium frozen foods, low-sodium or no salt added canned foods.

9 As infants wean from human milk or infant formula, transition to a healthy dietary pattern.

A healthy dietary pattern includes a variety of nutrient-dense fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, dairy, and oils.

In the second year of life, human milk is still recommended, but infant formula is no longer recommended. Calories and nutrients should be met mostly from age-appropriate foods and beverages.

For toddlers who are still consuming human milk, a healthy dietary pattern should include a similar combination of nutrient-dense complementary foods and beverages.



10 Other things to consider when feeding:

Practice responsive feeding

Responsive feeding is a feeding style that emphasises recognising and responding to a child's hunger and fullness cues. This helps children learn how to self regulate their intake to build healthy eating habits.

Prevent choking

Infants and toddlers should be given age and developmentally appropriate foods to help prevent choking.

Foods that can be a choking risk: hot dogs, candy, nuts and seeds, raw carrots, whole grapes, popcorn, and chunks of peanut butter.

Do not put infant cereal, rice, or other solid foods in an infant's bottle.

Child should be sitting up in a high chair or other safe, supervised place, with an adult supervising during mealtime.



Signs a Child is Hungry or Full

Birth Through Age 5 Months

A child may be hungry if he or she:

- Puts hands to mouth.
- Turns head toward breast or bottle.
- Puckers, smacks, or licks lips.
- Has clenched hands.

A child may be full if he or she:

- Closes mouth.
- Turns head away from breast or bottle.
- Relaxes hands.

Age 6 Through 23 Months

A child may be hungry if he or she:

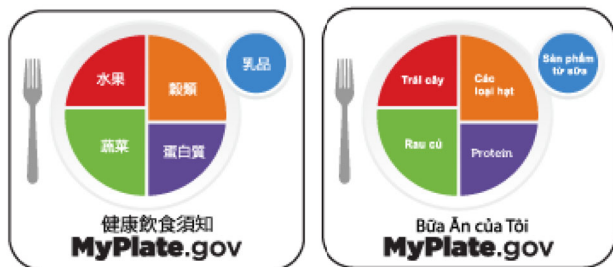
- Reaches for or points to food.
- Opens his or her mouth when offered a spoon or food.
- Gets excited when he or she sees food.
- Uses hand motions or makes sounds to let you know he or she is still hungry.

A child may be full if he or she:

- Pushes food away.
- Closes his or her mouth when food is offered.
- Turns his or her head away from food.
- Uses hand motions or makes sounds to let you know he or she is still full.



To learn more, visit MyPlate:



*Resources:

Storing and Handling Human Milk:

https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm

How to Prepare and Store Powdered Formula:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/downloads/prepare-store-powdered-infant-formula-508.pdf>

Reducing the Risk of Choking:

<https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/resources/reducing-risk-choking-young-children-mealtimes>

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RECIPE 1

VEGGIE TOFU PATTY WITH DIPPING SAUCE



SERVING:

About 24 small patties

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

Total time: 35 minutes

Cuisine: Asian, Vietnamese

INGREDIENTS:

Tofu patty:

- 14 oz firm tofu
- 1-2 green onions, chopped
- 1 carrot, shredded or grated
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Oil (such as olive, avocado, or sesame)
- 3-4 tbsp cornstarch

Fish sauce:

- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 1 tbsp squeezed lime or lemon juice
- 3 tbsp water

Vinegar soy sauce:

- 2 tbsp low sodium soy sauce
- 2 tbsp vinegar
- 1 tbsp sesame oil

INSTRUCTIONS:

For the tofu:

- Take the tofu block out of the package and place on a cutting board, baking pan, or container. Place some paper towels on top of the tofu and gently press down with your hands or with the bottom of a plate to remove the excess water.
- In a bowl, crumble the tofu with a fork or your hands.
- Add carrots, green onions, and garlic with the crumbled tofu. Add cornstarch and mix well. If the consistency is not thick enough, add more cornstarch.
- Shape the mixture into patties.
- Heat oil in a frying pan. When hot, place the patties on and cook over medium heat for 5 minutes or until golden brown. Flip over and cook the other side.

For the fish sauce:

- Add fish sauce into a small bowl.
- Mix in small amounts of squeezed lime or lemon juice and water, and add more to your liking.

For the vinegar soy sauce:

- Combine soy sauce, vinegar, and sesame oil in a small bowl.



RECIPE 2

MICROWAVE STEAMED EGGS



SERVING:

(Infants and toddlers): 1-2

Prep time (for the egg only): 2 minutes

Cook time (for the egg only): 2 minutes

Total time (for the egg only): 4 minutes

Cuisine: Asian, Chinese

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 egg
- 4 oz low sodium chicken broth
- Bunch of green onions, chopped
- 1/2 tsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp vegetables of choice, such as mushrooms, carrots, peas, spinach (optional)
- 2 tbsp protein of choice: ground chicken, lean ground pork, tofu (optional)
- Olive oil (if cooking meat)

INSTRUCTIONS:

For the meat:

- *If you want to add minced meat into your egg, follow these steps to cook your meat first:
- In a skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat.
- Using a spatula, add your minced meat into the skillet. Break apart the meat and cook until browned.

For the egg:

- In a microwave-safe bowl, add egg and broth.
- Whisk until egg is beaten and thoroughly mixed with the broth.
- Add in your cooked minced meat, tofu, mushrooms, and vegetables (optional).
- Note: The mixture should only fill up to half of the bowl, as the egg will rise when cooked.
- Cover the top of the bowl with a paper towel.
- Set your microwave at half power or ~700 watts. Microwave the egg mixture for 1.5 to 2 minutes, or until the egg is barely set in the middle, and jiggles gently if shaken. As every microwave is slightly different, if the egg is too runny, add additional cooking time in 30 second increments. Let the cooked egg rest for 1-2 minutes to let the egg finish steaming.
- Top with green onions and sesame oil and let the egg cool before serving.
- Fun tip: use your green onions to make smiley faces or decorate the egg!

