

Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP)



GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

Nutrition Between 1 and 2 Years of Age

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10 FAQs on NUTRITION BETWEEN 1 AND 2 YEARS OF AGE

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Under the Auspices of the IAP Action Plan 2020–2021

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Nutrition Between 1 and 2 Years of Age

Q1

My child is now 1 year old. Should I stop breastfeeding or continue?

- There is no need to stop breastfeeding after 1 year. It is a natural process for children to outgrow breastfeeding on their own. You should ensure that the child is taking enough nutrient rich food apart from breast milk; otherwise, there is a risk of malnutrition.
- Breast milk can provide up to one-third of energy needs beyond 1 year of age, and other nutrients (e.g., vitamin A and vitamin C) important for the health and emotional wellbeing of the child. It also boosts the immune system. Hence, mothers can continue breastfeeding along with other foods till 2 years of life, which is the period of maximum brain growth.
- During the entire period of breastfeeding (and beyond), mother should also have adequate nutrition including good amount of calcium and iron.
- Care should be taken to see that breast milk does not remain the predominant diet of the child at this age. The child must be offered semisolid cereal-based feeds in adequate quantity.

Q2

What should I feed my child at 1 year of age?

- By 1 year, child should be offered all foods prepared at home for other members of the family. He/she can take cereals, vegetables, fruits, pulses, milk, egg, meat, and fish. Iron-rich foods such as green leafy vegetables, jaggery, meat, and fish should be included in diet.
- “Variety is a good appetizer”. So, add variety, but introduce new foods one at a time.
- Food items to be avoided include tea, fruit juices, sugar-sweetened beverages and other junk foods containing high amount of sugar, salt, fat, and chemicals, which not only make the child feel full but are also harmful. Too much milk (apart from breastfeeding) should also be avoided. Use milk to prepare balanced foods for the child rather than making him/her drink the milk repeatedly.
- Self-feeding should be encouraged. Your baby will be slow and messy at first but it will promote good feeding habits.
- Offer foods up to 4–5 times in a day. Small frequent feeds may help to increase food intake and help in better digestion.
- Handle the food hygienically.
- Do not offer food sitting in front of TV/mobile. If possible, tell her/him good stories (It will improve her social skills also) at the time of feeding. Basically, make the mealtime a pleasant event for the child as well as for parents.
- Food items such as groundnut and sweets may lead to choking (aspiration). Forceful feeding also may rarely lead to aspiration. So, take care.

Q3

Please give me a diet chart for my 1-year-old child; a chart that shows food items, frequency, and quantity.

Morning: Two idli/dosa/appam/puri with vegetable/pulse curry. Everyday, we can rotate the item so that child will take it without hesitancy. Add little amount of ghee or oil and jaggery/sugar to food, wherever possible to enhance its nutritive value. You may add some milk, if demanded.

11 AM: Half the banana/other fruits. Always give fresh and seasonal whole fruits after removing peel and seeds to avoid choking. Avoid fruit juices. Let them enjoy whole fruits. Teach your child to peel-off fruit, remove its seeds, and let him/her enjoy the process.

Noon: Rice with sambar or chapati with dal, meat/fish/egg or/and green leafy vegetables should also be offered (**Fig. 1**).

4 PM: Upma/Dosa/Egg/Bread with butter/pulses/vegetable curries as appropriate.

Milk: 50–100 mL or use milk to make porridge (*dalia*).

Night: Chapati/Dosa/Rice/Uthappam/Khichdi with dal/curd/vegetable curry as appropriate.

Bedtime: 100 mL milk with half teaspoonful sugar.

Offer frequent breastfeeding as and when demanded by the child.

Note: This diet chart is representative. Modify it according to culture, acceptability, availability, and affordability. Rotate foods to offer more variety.

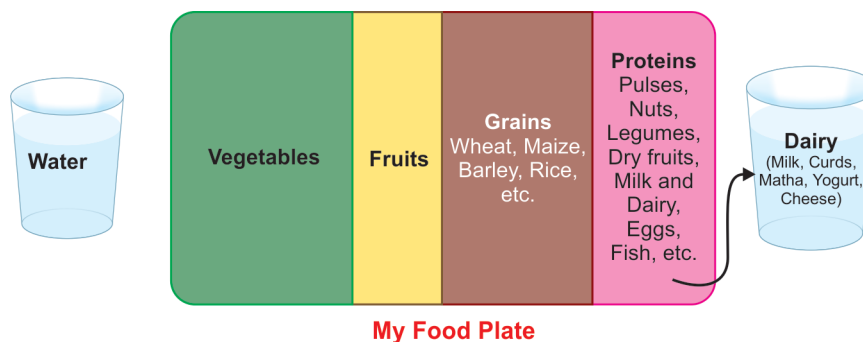


Fig. 1: Food plate.

Q4

Should I give commercially available baby foods to my 1-year-old child?

No! Homemade preparations with cereals, pulses, nuts (powdered or grinded), and jaggery are more nutritious and healthier than giving processed foods available in market. Also it is time to move away from giving porridge-like food textures and start giving foods which the child could enjoy to chew and eat. At this age, child should be eating what all the family members eat.

Q5

Should I give skimmed milk to my child to avoid the possibility of obesity in future?

- As far as possible, avoid skimmed milk. Also, avoid too much animal source milk. Both are poor sources of many nutrients. Rather, continue breastfeeding which will offer child extra nutrients, and is likely to reduce the risk of obesity in future.
- Babies at this age need fat in their diet for a variety of reasons, including for brain development. So, it is recommended to have whole milk.
- If your child is overweight/obese or there is family history of obesity/dyslipidemia or cardiovascular disease, skimmed milk may be offered or milk may be avoided altogether.
- In a healthy child, whole milk may be slowly switched to low fat milk after the age of 2 years.

Q6

**My toddler eats only few items and rejects other foods.
What should I do?**

Children have a natural dislike of new things. But, do not worry too much. Over time, they start eating new things. A child may refuse the food 15–20 times before he/she begins to give it a try. Patience pays. There are psychological reasons too. A child exerts independence and takes control of his/her life in this way. But, think again. According to one study, almost 50% of mothers labeled their child as picky eaters, whereas all the children in the study actually ate a wide variety of foods. Here are some tips to handle a picky eater:

- Provide a variety of foods (a well-balanced diet) to your child.
- Be patient; some babies take time to like and begin eating a new item.
- Make meal-times enjoyable and not an ordeal. Experiment with food shapes. For example, you can make star-shaped or fish-shaped chapatis or shape the salad-like a duck or a ship.
- Allow your child to feed self.
- Go slow. Do not offer too many new choices in one go. Offer small quantities initially.
- Involve your child while preparing food. You can ask what you should cook which he/she will find tasty. Take care of safety of the child while involving him/her in preparation of the food.

Q7

**Doctor! Please write a good appetizer for my
child who is now 15 months old.**

Appetizers are not recommended for children. Let the child decide how much he/she wants to eat. Many appetizers available in market are dubious preparations and their contents and claims cannot be verified. There are medicinal appetizers also, but most of them contain substances which cause sleepiness, irritability, and learning problems. There are some foods such as tamarind and soups which are supposed to be natural appetizers. If the child has some nutritional deficiency (e.g., anemia), treatment for the same may increase the appetite. Consult your pediatrician, if you have any such concern.

Q8

I have heard that calcium should be given to children for teething and strong bones. Should I give too? What other vitamins and supplements should I give?

Calcium supplements are not routinely needed in children of this age. Make sure your child gets a well-balanced diet and calcium-rich foods such as milk and other dairy products. If you are concerned about deficiency of calcium or vitamin D in the child's diet, consult your pediatrician who may decide to start some supplements after checking the child's nutritional status. Some children do need a daily multivitamin, iron or mineral supplement, such as:

- Kids who are not eating regular, well-balanced meals made from fresh, whole foods.
- Kids who have feeding difficulties, as in cerebral palsy.
- Kids on a vegan diet may need some supplements. Kids on other restricted diets also may need supplements.

Q9

Should I give fruit juices to my child?

Fruit juices are not recommended to be given to children up to 2 years of age. Most of the packaged ready-to-drink fruit juices have doubtful amount of real fruit content with unknown quantities of nutrients and lots of sugar. There is also increased risk of dental caries with intake of these fruit drinks. Fresh fruit juice contains some antioxidants, potassium, minerals and vitamins, especially vitamin C, but lacks protein and promotes obesity. Give whole fruits to your child because these provide additional fiber, which is good for digestion and avoiding constipation. Natural sugar of fruits (fructose) is released very slowly, and usually does not promote obesity.

Q10

What drinks are recommended for my young kid?

The American Academy of Pediatrics website for parents recommends only water and milk as drinks for under 5-years-old children (**Table 1**).

TABLE 1: Water and milk requirements for young children.

Age	Water	Milk
6–12 months	120–240 mL/day	Only breast milk
1–2 years	240–950 mL/day	300–500 mL/day, if no breastfeeding. It is recommended to continue breastfeeding; then less amount will be required
2–5 years	240–1200 mL	480–600 mL/day

1 cup = 240 mL

Source: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Recommended-Drinks-for-Young-Children-Ages-0-5.aspx>

Note: Generally, children below 2 years of age should not be given low fat or skimmed milk. Children above 2 years may be given skimmed/low fat or full fat milk, depending on their nutritional status.

Avoid 100% juice, stevia/sugar sweetened fruit drinks, flavored milk, and caffeinated or carbonated drinks.