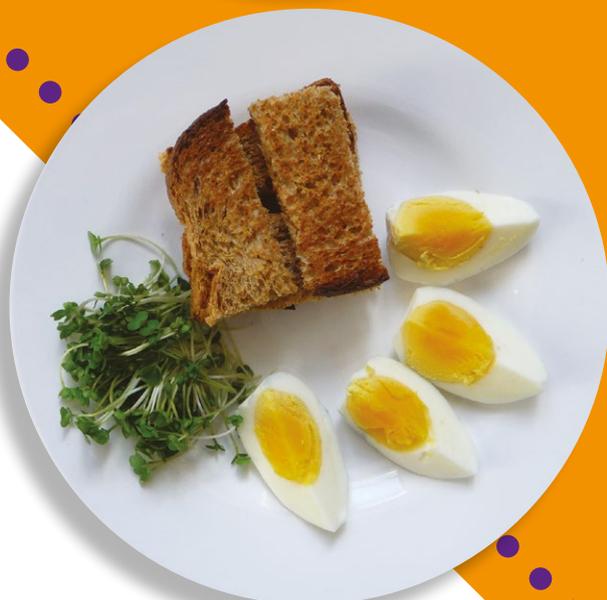


Eating well: snacks for 1 to under-5 year olds



Eating well: Snacks for 1 to under-5 year olds

By Dr Helen Crawley

ISBN e-book 978-1-908924-52-0

ISBN printed copy 978-1-908924-51-3

Published by First Steps Nutrition Trust, 2018.

Updated in 2023.

A PDF of this resource is available on the First Steps Nutrition Trust website www.firststepsnutrition.org

The text of this resource, and the photos, can be reproduced in other materials provided that the materials promote public health and make no profit, and an acknowledgement is made to First Steps Nutrition Trust.

This resource is provided for information only and individual advice on diet and health should always be sought from appropriate health professionals.

FIRST STEPS NUTRITION TRUST



First Steps Nutrition Trust

www.firststepsnutrition.org

E: admin@firststepsnutrition.org

Registered charity number: 1146408

First Steps Nutrition Trust is a charity which provides clear, evidence-based and independent information and support for good nutrition from pre-conception to five years of age. For more information, see our website www.firststepsnutrition.org

Acknowledgements

The resource was written by Dr Helen Crawley and updated by Rachel Childs and Dr Vicky Sibson.

Thanks to Diana Hawdon, Sarah Weston, Andrea Eaves and Rosa Sparks for additional help preparing the resource.

Photographs by Helena Little at BraveDesign.

Edited by Wordworks.

Design by Sally Geeve.

Contents

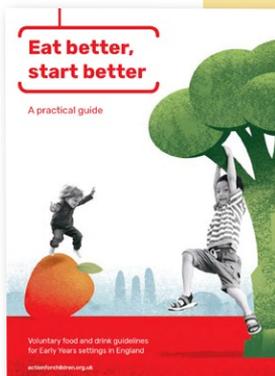
About this guide	4
Why do we need ideas for snacks?	5
Key principles of eating well for 1 to under-5 year olds	6
Key eating well tips	7
Drinks for 1 to under-5 year olds	8
Looking after children's teeth	10
Food safety and hygiene tips	11
What makes a good snack for a 1 to under-5 year olds?	12
Commercial toddler snacks	14
Example snacks for 1 to under-5 year olds	16
Some simple snacks to take out and about	16
Ideas for snacks at home and in early years settings	23
Other information	33
Good sources of vitamins and minerals	33
Plates, bowls, snack boxes and drink bottles used in this resource	35
First Steps Nutrition Trust – Useful resources	38

About this guide

This guide has been written to provide practical ideas for anyone who is preparing snacks for children aged from 12-59 months, i.e from 1 to under-5 years old. We hope it will be particularly useful to early years settings and childminders who may want support for themselves, and for the families who use their services, on nutritious, cost-effective and practical snacks for children of this age. Health visitors, nursery nurses, children's centre staff and other health project workers might also find the guide useful, to support practical work with families.

The snacks in this resource are in line with the national nutrition guidance for early years settings in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (see below).

For more information about eating well for 1 to under-5 year olds in early years settings



ENGLAND

Eat better, start better. A practical guide. Voluntary food and drink guidelines for early years settings in England

Available at:

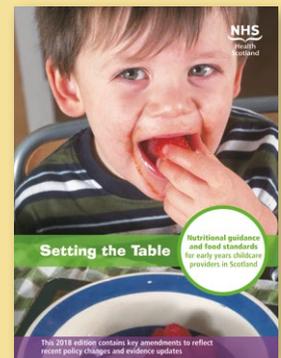
<https://foundationyears.org.uk>

SCOTLAND

Setting the table: Nutritional guidance and food standards for early years childcare providers in Scotland

Available at:

www.healthscotland.com

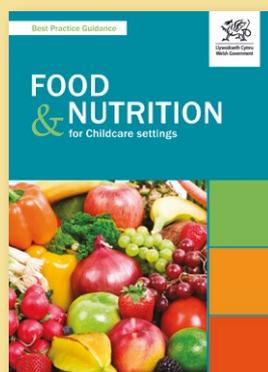


WALES

Food and health guidelines: For early years and childcare settings

Available at:

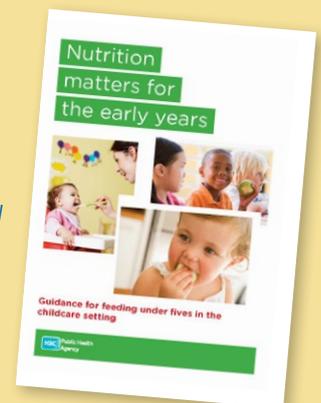
<https://www.gov.wales/>



NORTHERN IRELAND

Nutrition matters for the early years

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/>



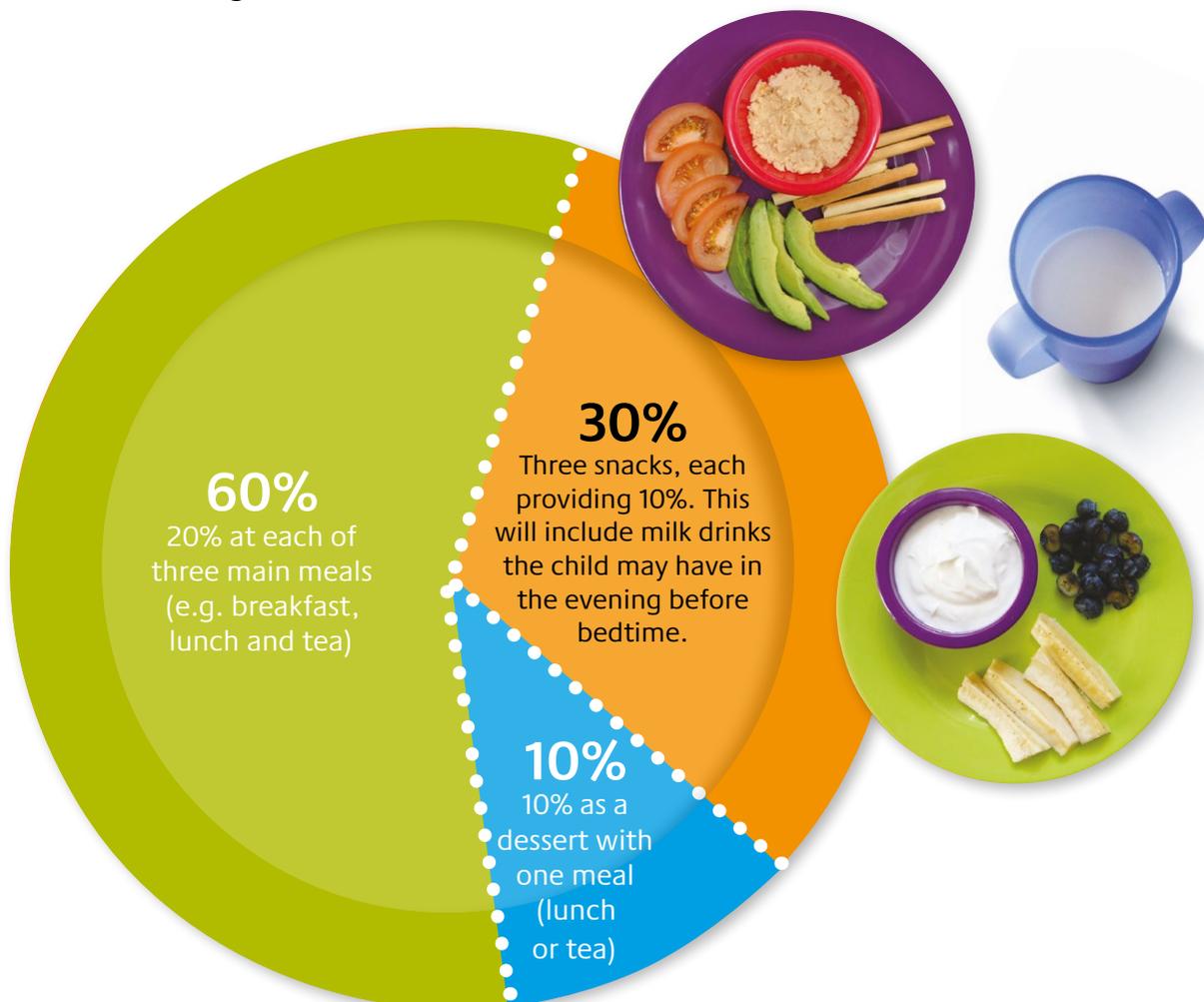
Why do we need ideas for snacks?

Healthy eating and physical activity are essential for proper growth and development in childhood. To help children develop patterns of healthy eating from an early age, it is important that the food and eating patterns to which children are exposed – both at home and outside the home – are those that promote positive attitudes and enjoyment of good food. In society, snacks are often perceived to be higher-fat, higher-salt and higher-sugar foods such as biscuits, cakes, confectionery, ice-cream and crisps, but for young children a snack simply offers an opportunity to provide some extra energy and nutrients between meals, particularly for those with smaller appetites.

It can sometimes help to think of snacks for children as ‘mini meals’, to avoid confusion with snacking culture. All the same principles of eating well should apply to mini meals as to main meals, and high-fat, high-salt and high-sugar foods should be an occasional treat and not everyday offerings.

Energy and nutrient needs of 1 to under-5 year olds

In general it is suggested that the energy and nutrient needs of children of this age are met as shown below.



Key principles of eating well for 1 to under-5 year olds

The three golden rules

1 Base meals and snacks around unprocessed and minimally processed foods.

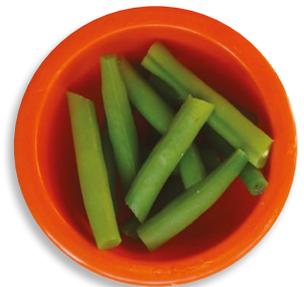
What does this mean? Choose foods in their simplest form – starchy foods such as bread, rice, pasta and potatoes; fruits and vegetables both fresh and plain frozen; eggs, peas, beans and lentils, meat, fish and milk.

2 Avoid ultra-processed foods. If there are more than a handful of ingredients on the label, put it back on the shelf!

What does this mean? Ultra-processed foods are those you buy that have already been prepared, baked, fried, extruded, moulded or shaped, and that usually have other ingredients added, such as salt, sugar, fat, flavourings and other additives. They may be designed to have a long shelf life, be convenient, palatable, ready-to-eat or ready-to-heat as a meal or snack, or to replace freshly prepared dishes and meals.

3 Meal times matter. Take your time, eat together, make eating a happy event, and be a good role model in how you eat yourself.

What does this mean? Eating together, and sharing food, conversation and traditions, are important to all human society. Children will eat better when they can model what the adults around them do, and everyone will benefit from eating better together.



Key eating well tips

A good variety of different foods is important.

This will help ensure all the important nutrients (vitamins and minerals) are included in the diet.

Make sure snacks are varied from day to day.

Choose good-quality food.

Young children need to eat small quantities of good food regularly. The best foods are those that are simple and that have been made from good-quality ingredients. There is some evidence that organically grown foods are more nutrient-dense than those grown conventionally. Avoid foods that are 'diluted' – for example, processed meat or fish covered with breadcrumbs, batter or other coatings (such as sausage rolls, Scotch eggs, chicken nuggets or fish cakes) that make them lower in nutrients, and often higher in fat, salt and calories.

Young children should eat child-sized portions of at least five different fruit and vegetables a day. Where children are reluctant to eat these foods, they should at least taste five different ones every day and have them served with meals and snacks so they become familiar with them.

Make sure food for 1 to under-5 year olds year olds is low in salt.

Avoid foods designed for adults, take-aways and foods that are high in salt, such as processed meat, salty snacks and biscuits, sauces and ready-prepared meals.

Limit sugar intake.

Children do not need sugary foods such as sweets, biscuits, cakes, chocolate, soft drinks or sugar for energy. Starchy foods – such as potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and yam – are better sources of energy, as they contain other important nutrients too. Sugary foods are also linked to overweight in children, and to tooth decay.

Good sources of calcium, riboflavin and iodine should be served every day.

Whole or semi-skimmed cows' milk, cheeses, and unsweetened yoghurt and fromage frais are good sources of these nutrients. For children who do not have dairy products, an unsweetened fortified milk alternative such as soya milk alternative or unsweetened fortified soya yoghurt can provide these nutrients. For details of other dairy substitutes for children see page 8, and for more examples of foods rich in these nutrients, see page 33.

Good sources of iron and zinc should be included in snacks.

This includes eggs, red meat, oil-rich fish, nuts, seeds and pulses. See page 34 for examples of foods that are high in iron and zinc.

Drinks for 1 to under-5 year olds

Water

Children should be encouraged to drink tap water if they are thirsty, and fresh drinking water should be available at all times. Water quenches thirst, does not spoil the appetite, and does not damage teeth. Plain milk and water are the only drinks that are safe for children's teeth.



Drinks to avoid

Avoid soft drinks such as squash, cordial or fizzy drinks as these are high in sugar, and often acidic, and these drinks can damage children's teeth and provide empty calories.

Fruit-based or carbonated sugar-free or low-sugar drinks can also damage children's teeth as they are acidic. Children aged 1 to under 5-years should not be given drinks containing artificial sweeteners (such as saccharin and aspartame), the preservative E211 or the artificial colours E102, E104, E110, E122, E124 or E129.

Fresh fruit juices are high in free sugars and can also damage teeth and these are not needed in the diet of 1 to under-5 year olds. If juices are given, they should be diluted 50:50 with water and only served with meals. Avoid cartons of fruit juice as these cannot be diluted.

Children should not be given tea, coffee, cola or other drinks that contain caffeine, as these disrupt children's sleep. Also, tea is not suitable for under-5s, as it contains tannic acid, which interferes with iron absorption.

Milk and non-dairy milk alternatives

Where mothers choose to breastfeed their toddler into the second year and beyond, this should be supported. Parents may choose to continue to provide expressed breastmilk for toddlers in childcare settings, and information on the safe storage of expressed breastmilk can be found at

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/expressing-storing-breast-milk/

Children over the age of 1 year do not need follow-on milks or fortified toddler milks as

- these are frequently sweetened and may
- have the wrong balance of nutrients.
- Pasteurised whole and semi-skimmed
- cows' milk (or goats' or sheep's milk) can
- be the main milk drink from 1 year of age
- if breastmilk is not being given. Children
- should not have 1% fat or skimmed milk
- under the age of 5.
- There are a number of non-dairy milk
- alternatives available, and any drink
- offered should be unsweetened and
- fortified. For more information, see page 9.

Non-dairy milk alternatives compared with cows' milk

Per 100ml	Cows' milk		Non-dairy milk alternatives				
	Whole ¹	Semi-skimmed ¹	Unsweetened fortified oat milk alternative ²	Unsweetened fortified soya milk alternative ³	Unsweetened fortified pea protein alternative ⁴	Unsweetened fortified coconut milk alternative ⁵	Unsweetened fortified almond milk alternative ⁶
Energy kcal	63	46	48	38	37	14	13
Protein g	3.4	3.4	1.1	3.4	1.3	0.1	0.4
Carbohydrate g	4.6	4.7	7	1.1	2.8	0	0
Fat g	3.6	1.7	1.1	2.1	2.2	1.2	1.1
Vitamin D micrograms	Trace	Trace	1.5	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Riboflavin mg	0.23	0.24	0.21	0.21	Not added	Not added	0.21
Vitamin B12 micrograms	0.9	0.9	0.38	0.38	0.9	Not added	0.38
Calcium mg	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Iodine⁷ micrograms	31	30	22.5	22.4	30	Not added	Not added
Salt g	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.15	0.07	0.14
Price per 100ml	11p	11p	21p	13p	19p	21p	21p

1. Based on cost of Tesco whole milk and semi-skimmed milk, 2 pints (1.136 litre) 2023.

2. Based on Oatly UHT Semi oat milk alternative, Tesco 2023.

3. Based on Tesco own-brand unsweetened UHT soya milk alternative 2023.

4. Based on Mighty M.Lkology Semi Uht Pea Protein Drink, Tesco 2023.

5. Based on Alpro unsweetened UHT coconut milk alternative, Tesco 2023.

6. Based on Alpro unroasted unsweetened UHT almond milk alternative, Tesco 2023.

Looking after children's teeth

To protect the teeth of young children, the key messages are:

- Reduce the total amount, and the frequency of consumption of, drinks and foods that contain sugar.
- Only have sugary foods as part of a meal, not between meals.
- Sugary foods and drinks include sweets, cakes, biscuits, soft drinks, fruit juices and smoothies, fruit purées and dried fruits.
- Commercial fruit snacks, baby fruit purées and fruit leathers all contain sugars which can damage teeth and shouldn't be given as snacks to young children.
- Carbonated and fruit-based drinks can damage teeth even if they are 'sugar-free'. These drinks are acidic and this can damage the tooth enamel. Artificial sweeteners should also be avoided in the diets of children under 5.
- Avoid children 'sucking' sugary foods and drinks across the teeth: for example, drinking from a bottle, sippy cups with valves that have to be sucked, and any food sold in a pouch with a nozzle that children may suck directly from.
- **Children aged 1 to under-5 years only need water or milk to drink.** Avoiding other drinks will protect their teeth, and drinks can be a source of unnecessary calories that contribute to overweight.

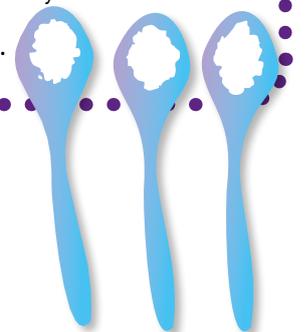
For additional advice on protecting young children's teeth through tooth brushing and the use of other protective measures, see *Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-better-oral-health-an-evidence-based-toolkit-for-prevention>



Did you know?

Fruit purées in pouches are high in free sugars. Never give these to young children as snacks, or allow children to suck from the pouch directly.

A typical pouch contains the equivalent of 3 teaspoons of sugar.



Food safety and hygiene tips

- The person who prepares the snacks should wash their hands before making the snack.
- Children should always wash their hands before eating.
- Children under 5 should always be supervised when eating.
- If you prepare foods in advance and store them in the fridge, use them within 48 hours.
- It's particularly important to store meat safely in the fridge, to stop bacteria from spreading and to avoid food poisoning:
 - Store raw meat and poultry in clean, sealed containers on the bottom shelf of the fridge, so they can't touch or drip onto other food.
 - Follow any storage instructions on the label, and don't eat meat after its use-by date.
 - Keep cooked meat separate from raw meat.

'Best before' and 'use-by' dates

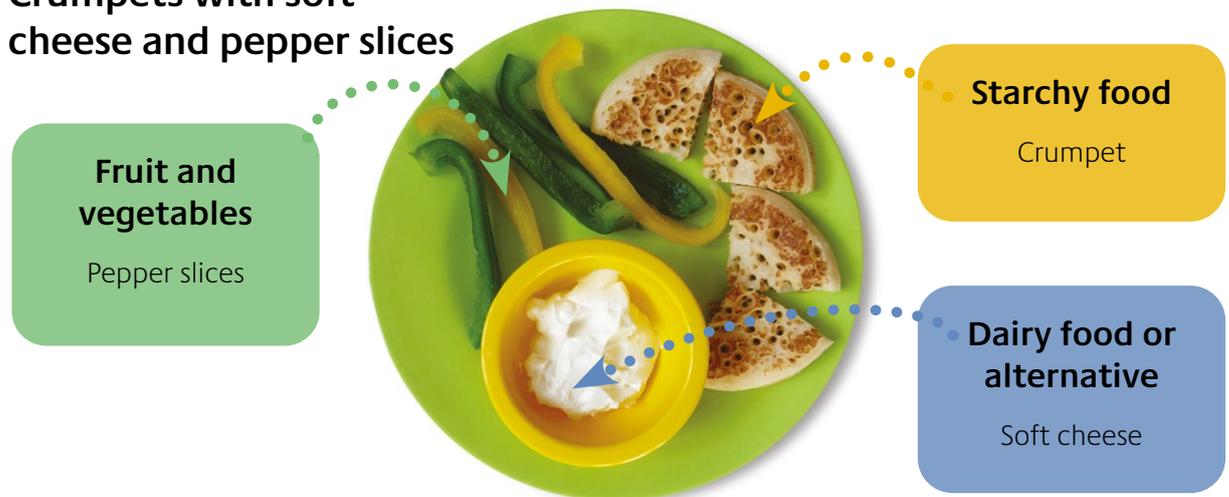
- Food with a 'use-by' date goes off quite quickly and it can be dangerous to eat after this date.
- Food with a 'best before' date is longer-lasting. It should be safe to eat, but may not be at its best quality after this date.

What makes a good snack for 1 to under-5 year old?

Snacks are an opportunity to offer young children additional energy and nutrients between meals. Snacks should be viewed as 'mini meals', using the same healthy foods as meals do, and not an opportunity for young children to be given what people often think of as 'snack foods.' In order that young children get the nutrients they need without an excess of energy (calories) – which can contribute to overweight – the foods offered as snacks should offer a range of nutrients without adding sugar to the diet, and minimising additional salt intake.

Vegetables, fruit, dairy foods (and non-dairy alternatives), meat, fish, eggs, pulses, ground nuts, bread and other cereals can all be included in snacks (see the example snacks below). How energy and nutrients are divided up across the day will vary depending on how, and where, a young child spends their day. In this resource we give a range of ideas for snacks to show the sorts of foods, and amounts of food that, if a variety are eaten over time, will each meet 10% of a young child's daily energy and nutrient needs.

Crumpets with soft cheese and pepper slices



Sardines on toast with celery



Scotch pancakes with sliced banana and strawberries



Fruit and vegetables
Banana and strawberries

Starchy food
Scotch pancake

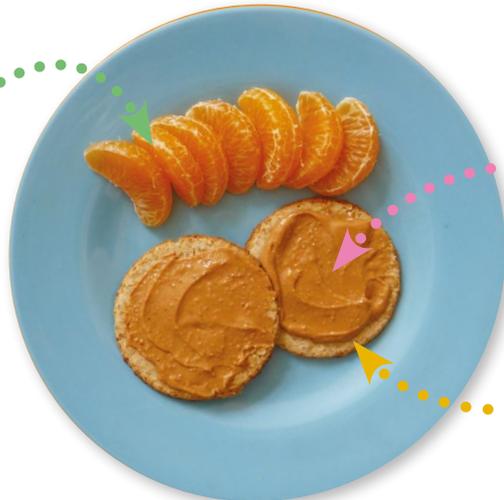
Mini avocado and tomato salsa sandwiches



Starchy food
Wholemeal bread

Fruit and vegetables
Avocado and tomato salsa

Oatcakes with Brazil nut butter and satsumas



Fruit and vegetables
Satsumas

Protein food
Brazil nut butter

Starchy food
Oatcakes

Commercial toddler snacks

There may be times when quick snacks are needed when families are out and about, and it is tempting to buy ready-prepared commercial snack foods marketed for young children for these occasions. Many of the snacks sold for this age group are ‘alternatives’ of adult snack foods: savoury puffs, biscuits, fruit bars and dried fruit snacks. There is no reason to start young children on a ‘snack food’ journey that may contribute to poor eating habits as they get older. Whilst many foods will market themselves as premium products for young children, it is much cheaper and healthier, and a better learning experience for young children, if foods offered look and taste like the foods they will have at family meal times. The unusual taste and texture of many baby snacks will be a surprise to adults, and it is important to remember that the foods often offer little in the way of good nutrition.

Good reasons to avoid commercial snacks

Snack foods for toddlers are ultra-processed foods.

Although ultra-processed foods may contain some nutrients, they are often higher in fat, salt and sugar than unprocessed or minimally processed food. There are concerns that everyone eats too many of these foods and this can contribute to chronic health problems in later life.



Many fruit-based snacks are high in sugar.

Dried fruit bars, jellies, melts, fruit-based biscuits and wafers, purées and fruit juices are often very high in sugar, and the sugars in these foods can damage teeth. These foods are not recommended between meals even if they are sold as snacks.

Many snack foods are low in fibre and the important nutrients found in minimally processed foods.

The simple snacks we recommend in this resource all contain minimally processed foods that will contribute important nutrients and other food components to the diet. Many commercial foods are also similar in texture and don't require young children to bite and chew a range of textures.



Commercial snack foods contribute a lot of packaging waste.

Wrapping small food portions in multiple wrappings creates a lot of packaging waste. Using reusable snack boxes creates far less waste. Baby food pouches are currently unrecyclable.



Commercial snack foods don't help young children recognise and taste the foods we want them to eat for long-term health.

The taste and texture of many commercial foods will be sweet and bland, the colours are often shades of beige, and the textures can often be very similar. Children need to try a range of foods of different colours, authentic tastes and textures.



Commercial snack foods for young children are expensive.

A bag of 'puffs' costs between 75p and 90p for 12-20g, dried fruit snacks typically cost between 40p and 75p for 12-17g, and biscuits cost between 25p and 90p for 20-25g. These small portion sizes don't meet the energy needs at snack time for a 1 to under-5 year old, as well as not offering a range of other nutrients. Costs of home-prepared snack foods are shown on pages 17-32.



Some simple snacks to take out and about

All of the snacks below contain about 100kcal, are low in salt and sugar, and offer other important nutrients and fibre. They are simple to prepare and can be assembled quickly. We have shown them packed into simple snack boxes, and details of these boxes are found on page 35. Each recipe makes 1 portion.

We have estimated the prices using current prices from Tesco online (2023 prices), allowing for preparation and waste costs.

Chapatti and carrot sticks	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Puffed wheat and mango	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Puffed wheat and melon	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Puffed wheat, carrots and peppers	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Rice cake and apricot	Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian
Rice cake, mozzarella and orange	Egg-free • Gluten-free
Rice cake, mozzarella and cherry tomatoes	Egg-free • Gluten-free
Matzo cracker and mango	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Matzo cracker, carrot, pepper and tomatoes	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Scotch pancake and banana	Vegetarian
Scotch pancake, carrot, pepper and tomato	Vegetarian
Mozzarella and green beans	Egg-free • Gluten-free
Milk and banana	Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian
Milk and melon	Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian
Milk, blueberries and mandarin orange	Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian
Milk and carrots	Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian
Milk, peppers and tomatoes	Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian
Milk, peppers and carrots	Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian

Avoiding choking hazards

- When packing snacks to take out and about, make sure to avoid chunks of food such as apple, whole small fruits such as grapes, popcorn, gelatinous foods, whole nuts and other known choking hazards.
- Never leave a child alone when they are eating.

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Chapatti and carrot sticks

Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 15p per portion

**Ingredients**

This makes 1 portion.

1/2 chapatti (25g), cut into slices

1 1/2 medium carrots (100g), washed, topped and tailed, and peeled

Method

1. Cut the chapatti into four slices lengthways.
2. Cut the carrots into sticks.

TIP Choose lower-salt chapattis or other lower-salt breads.

Puffed wheat and mango

Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 49p per portion

**Ingredients**

This makes 1 portion.

1 heaped tablespoon (10g) puffed wheat

1/2 mango (100g), skin and stone removed, and sliced lengthways

Method

1. Put a heaped tablespoon of puffed wheat into a container.
2. Store the puffed wheat and mango slices separately, to prevent the puffed wheat from going soggy.

Puffed wheat and melon

Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 26p per portion

**Ingredients**

This makes 1 portion.

1 heaped tablespoon puffed wheat (10g)

1 slice melon (100g), washed, with skin and seeds removed, and sliced lengthways

Method

1. Put a heaped tablespoon of puffed wheat into a container.
2. Store the puffed wheat and melon slices separately, to prevent the puffed wheat from going soggy.

TIP Choose lower-sugar puffed wheat or other lower-sugar plain cereals. A range of fruits and vegetables can be offered. Choose those that can be easily cut into sticks or are easy for a small child to hold, and which won't go brown or mushy. Check the advice on avoiding choking hazards on page 16.

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Puffed wheat, carrots and peppers

Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 24p per portion

**Ingredients**

This makes 1 portion.

1 heaped tablespoon (10g) puffed wheat

1½ small carrots (50g), washed, topped and tailed, peeled, and cut into sticks

⅓ small pepper (50g), washed, core and seeds removed, and cut into sticks

Method

1. Put a heaped tablespoon of puffed wheat into a container.
2. Store the puffed wheat and vegetable sticks separately, to prevent the puffed wheat from going soggy.

Rice cake and apricot

Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian

Cost: 47p per portion

**Ingredients**

This makes 1 portion.

1 rice cake (8g)

80g of fresh apricots

Method

1. Slice the rice cake into fingers
2. Wash the apricots and cut in half to remove the stone, and then cut into quarters.

Rice cake, mozzarella and orange

Egg-free • Gluten-free

Cost: 31p per portion

**Ingredients**

This makes 1 portion.

1 rice cake (8g)

¼ mozzarella ball (30g), drained and chopped into small chunks

⅓ orange (30g), peeled and divided into segments

Method

1. Mix the mozzarella chunks and orange segments together.

TIP Choose lower-salt rice cakes, or swap for other lower-salt savoury crackers or grain-based cakes (e.g. corn). Choose full-fat mozzarella.

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Rice cake, mozzarella and cherry tomatoes

Egg-free • Gluten-free

Cost: 29p per portion



Ingredients

This makes 1 portion.

1 rice cake (8g)

1/4 mozzarella ball (30g), chopped into small chunks

3 cherry tomatoes (30g), chopped into quarters

Method

1. Mix the mozzarella chunks and the tomato quarters together.

TIP Choose lower-salt rice cakes, or swap for other lower-salt savoury crackers or grain-based cakes (e.g. corn). Choose full-fat mozzarella.

Matzo cracker and mango

Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 53p per portion



Ingredients

This makes 1 portion.

1 matzo cracker (10g)

1/2 mango (100g), washed, skin and stone removed, and sliced lengthways

Method

1. Serve the matzo cracker and mango slices separately, to prevent the cracker from going soggy.

Matzo cracker, carrot, pepper and tomatoes

Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 29p per portion



Ingredients

This makes 1 portion.

1 matzo cracker (10g)

1 small carrot (40g), washed, topped and tailed, and peeled

1/2 small pepper (40g), washed and with core and seeds removed

2 cherry tomatoes (20g), chopped into quarters

Method

1. Cut the carrot and pepper into sticks.
2. Serve the matzo cracker separately from the vegetable sticks and tomatoes, to prevent the cracker from going soggy.

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Scotch pancake and banana

Vegetarian

Cost: 16p per portion



Ingredients

This makes 1 portion.

1 Scotch pancake (30g), sliced into four strips

1/2 medium banana (50g) (Leave the skin on until you are ready to serve it.)

TIP Choose lower-sugar pancakes or other lower-sugar plain breads.

Scotch pancake, carrot, pepper and tomato

Vegetarian

Cost: 27p per portion



Ingredients

This makes 1 portion.

1 Scotch pancake (30g)

1 small carrot (40g), washed, topped, tailed and peeled

1/2 small pepper (40g), washed and with core and seeds removed

2 cherry tomatoes (20g), cut into quarters

Method

1. Slice the Scotch pancake into four strips.
2. Cut the carrot it into sticks.
3. Cut the pepper into sticks.
4. Add the tomato quarters.

TIP Choose lower-sugar pancakes or other lower-sugar plain breads.

Mozzarella and green beans

Egg-free • Gluten-free

Cost: 31p per portion



Ingredients

This makes 1 portion.

1/3 mozzarella ball (40g), drained, and chopped into small chunks

2 tablespoons green beans (40g), washed, topped and tailed

Method

1. The green beans can be served lightly steamed and then cooled, or raw.

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

All of the following snacks contain 100ml full-fat milk and fruit or vegetables.

Milk and banana

Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian

Cost: 19p per portion



Ingredients

This makes 1 portion of about 100ml of whole or semi-skimmed milk and 40g banana.

1/2 medium banana (50g) (Leave the skin on until you are ready to serve it.)

Milk and melon

Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian

Cost: 30p per portion



Ingredients

This makes 1 portion of about 100ml of whole or semi-skimmed milk and 120g melon.

1 large slice melon (120g), washed, with skin and seeds removed, and sliced lengthways

Milk, blueberries and mandarin orange

Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian

Cost: 62p per portion



Ingredients

This makes 1 portion of about 100ml of whole or semi-skimmed milk and 30g blueberries and 50g mandarin orange.

30g blueberries

50g mandarin orange, peeled and divided into segments

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Milk and carrots

Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian

Cost: 16p per portion



Ingredients

This makes 1 portion of about 100ml of whole or semi-skimmed milk and 100g carrots.

1 medium carrot (100g), washed, topped and tailed, peeled, and cut into sticks

Milk, peppers and tomatoes

Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian

Cost: 32p per portion



Ingredients

This makes 1 portion of about 100ml of whole or semi-skimmed milk, 40g peppers and 40g tomatoes.

1/2 small pepper (40g), washed and with core and seeds removed

4 cherry tomatoes (40g), washed and chopped into quarters

Milk, peppers and carrots

Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian

Cost: 24p per portion



Ingredients

This makes 1 portion of about 100ml of whole or semi-skimmed milk, 40g peppers and 40g carrots.

1/2 small pepper (40g), washed and with core and seeds removed

1/2 medium carrot (40g), washed, topped and tailed, peeled and cut into sticks

Ideas for snacks at home and in early years settings

The snacks below average about 100kcal. Some are more than 100kcal and some are less, but they have been calculated to meet average nutritional needs across a period of a week or more as a varied diet is encouraged. The snacks are low in salt and sugar, and offer other important nutrients and fibre. Each recipe makes 4 portions.

We have estimated the prices using current prices from Tesco online (2023 prices), allowing for preparation and waste costs. Eggs are costed as free-range eggs.

Breadsticks with cannellini bean houmous dip and tomato and avocado wedges	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Crumpets with soft cheese and pepper slices	Egg-free • Vegetarian
Hard-boiled egg slices, toast and mustard and cress	Dairy-free • Vegetarian
Scotch pancakes with sliced banana and strawberries	Vegetarian
Mini avocado and tomato salsa sandwiches	Vegetarian
Oatcakes, cottage cheese and red pepper sticks	Egg-free • Vegetarian
Oatcakes with almond butter and satsumas	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Mini chopped chicken and pineapple sandwiches	Egg-free
Pitta bread fingers with tuna pâté and cucumber sticks	Egg-free
Rice cakes with lentil and peanut butter pâté and red and green pepper	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Rice cakes with mushroom pâté and cherry tomatoes	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Sardines on toast with celery	Dairy-free • Egg-free
Yoghurt with chopped banana and blueberries	Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian
Wholemeal roll with almond butter and carrot sticks	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Vegan fruit scone with strawberries	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Mashed egg with breadsticks and radishes	Vegetarian
Wholemeal toast with pinto bean spread and carrot sticks	Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan
Sweet potato wedges and yoghurt dip	Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Breadsticks with cannellini bean houmous dip and tomato and avocado wedges

Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 47p per portion



Ingredients

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 35g houmous dip, 10g breadsticks, and 40g avocado and tomato.

1/2 can (400g) cannellini beans, drained (drained weight 130g)

1/2 teaspoon garlic paste

1 teaspoon tahini (sesame seed) paste

1/2 teaspoon vegetable oil

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 teaspoon water

1/2 teaspoon paprika powder

8 breadsticks

1 large tomato, sliced

1 avocado, peeled, de-stoned and sliced

Method

1. Put the beans, garlic paste, tahini, oil, lemon juice, water and paprika into a blender and blend until smooth. Or place in a bowl and mash.
2. Serve with the breadsticks, and the slices of tomatoes and avocado.

Crumpets with soft cheese and pepper slices

Egg-free • Vegetarian

Cost: 34p per portion



Ingredients

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 40g crumpet, 30g soft cheese, and 40g peppers.

4 crumpets

4 tablespoons full-fat soft cheese

2 medium green or yellow peppers, washed, stalk and seeds removed, and cut into strips

Method

1. Toast the crumpets and cut each one into four pieces.
2. Serve with the soft cheese and pepper strips.

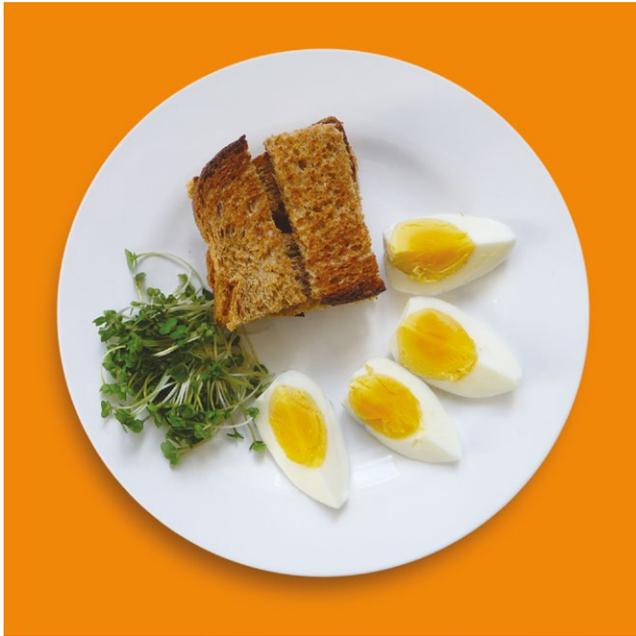
SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Hard-boiled egg slices, toast and mustard and cress

Dairy-free • Vegetarian

Cost: 39p per portion

**Ingredients**

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 50g egg, 30g wholemeal bread, and 5g mustard and cress.

4 free-range eggs

4 slices wholemeal bread

1 punnet (or home-grown) mustard and cress

Method

1. Hard-boil the eggs, peel and cut into quarters.
2. Toast the bread and cut into slices.
3. Arrange the egg slices, toast and mustard and cress on a small plate.

Scotch pancakes with sliced banana and strawberries

Vegetarian

Cost: 28p per portion

**Ingredients**

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 40g Scotch pancake, 20g banana, and 20g strawberries.

100g self-raising flour

1 free-range egg

100ml of whole or semi-skimmed milk

1 teaspoon vegetable oil

1/2 large or 1 small banana (80g), peeled and sliced

8-10 strawberries (80g), washed and tops removed, and cut into pieces

Method

1. To make the Scotch pancakes, put the flour in a bowl, make a well in the centre, add the egg and half the milk and beat to a thick batter. Stir in the remaining milk.
2. Lightly grease a large thick-bottomed frying pan, preferably non-stick, and gently heat the oil until a haze appears.
3. Spoon the mixture into the pan in tablespoons, keeping each spoonful separate. When bubbles rise to the surface, turn the pancakes over and cook on the other side for 30 seconds.
4. Serve the Scotch pancakes with the banana and strawberries.

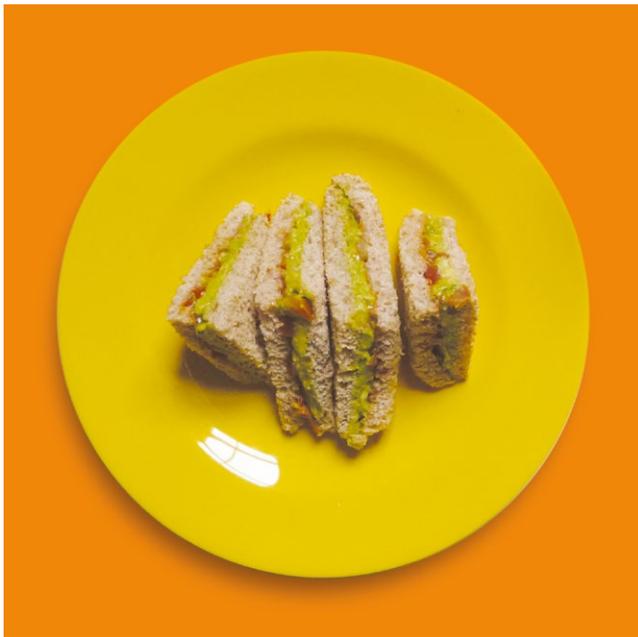
SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Mini avocado and tomato salsa sandwiches

Vegetarian

Cost: 34p per portion

**Ingredients**

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 80g.

- 1 medium tomato, finely chopped
- 2 spring onions, topped and tailed, and finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic paste
- 1/2 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 4 large slices wholemeal bread
- 1 large avocado, peeled, stone removed, and mashed

Method

1. To make the tomato salsa, mix the tomato, onions, garlic, parsley and pepper together in a bowl.
2. Spread two slices of bread with the mashed avocado and a layer of salsa.
3. Cut into mini triangles.

Oatcakes, cottage cheese and red pepper sticks

Egg-free • Vegetarian

Cost: 40p per portion

**Ingredients**

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 20g oatcake, 35g cottage cheese, and 40g red pepper

- 8 medium oatcakes
- 140g cottage cheese
- 2 medium red peppers, washed, seeds and stems removed, and cut into strips lengthways

Method

1. Break the oatcakes into pieces.
2. Serve with the cottage cheese and red pepper strips.

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Oatcakes with almond butter and satsumas

Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 45p per portion

**Ingredients**

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 20g oatcakes and almond butter, and 40g satsuma.

8 oatcakes

60g almond butter

4 small satsumas or clementines, peeled and divided into segments

Method

1. Spread the oatcakes with almond butter.
2. Serve with the orange segments.

Mini chopped chicken and pineapple sandwiches

Egg-free

Cost: 32p per portion

**Ingredients**

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 90g.

1 chicken breast, grilled, skin removed, and cut into small pieces

2 tablespoons (50g) Greek yoghurt

2 slices (80g) tinned pineapple

4 slices wholemeal bread

Method

1. Cut one of the pineapple slices into small pieces.
2. To make the sandwich filling, mix the chicken and the chopped pineapple together, moistening the mixture with the Greek yoghurt.
3. Spread the mixture evenly over two slices of bread and cover with the other two slices.
4. Cut each sandwich into four pieces and serve with the remaining pineapple, cut into chunks.

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Pitta bread fingers with tuna pâté and cucumber sticks

Egg-free

Cost: 39p per portion



Ingredients

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 30g pitta bread, 40g tuna pâté, and 40g cucumber.

1 can (160g) tuna in water, drained (drained weight 112g)

2 tablespoons (50g) Greek yoghurt

Juice of 1/2 lemon

2 pitta breads

1/2 (160g) cucumber, washed and cut into sticks

Method

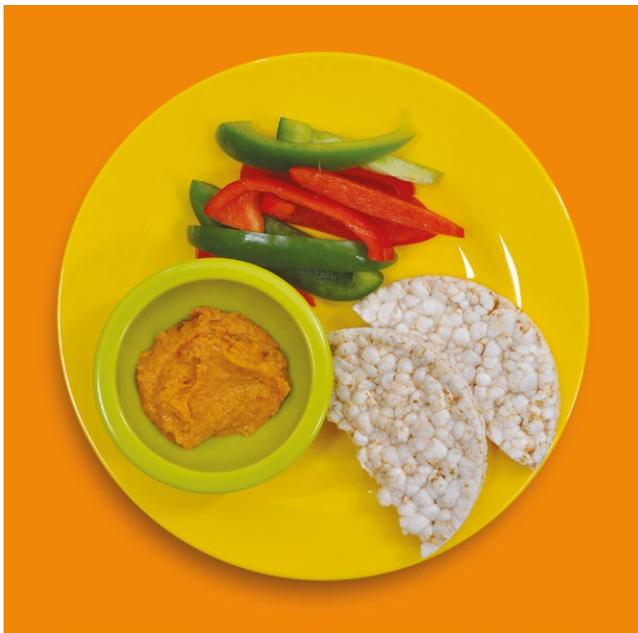
1. To make the tuna pâté, mix together the drained tuna, yoghurt and lemon juice.
2. Toast the pitta bread and cut into slices.
3. Serve with the tuna pâté and cucumber sticks.

Rice cakes with lentil and peanut butter pâté and red and green pepper

Dairy-free • Egg-free • Gluten-free

Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 34p per portion



Ingredients

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 40g rice cake and pâté, and 40g pepper.

30g dried red lentils

1 teaspoon vegetable oil

1/2 small onion, peeled and finely chopped

1/2 teaspoon curry powder

1 teaspoon tomato purée

1 teaspoon lemon juice

3 teaspoons smooth peanut butter

4 rice cakes

1 red pepper, washed, cored, de-seeded and sliced

1 green pepper, washed, cored, de-seeded and sliced

Method

1. Bring a small pan of water to the boil, and then add the lentils and reduce the heat and simmer for 20 minutes until soft. Drain the lentils.
2. Heat the oil in a small pan and fry the onion until soft.
3. Add the curry powder and lentils.
4. Add the tomato purée, lemon juice and peanut butter and remove from the heat.
5. Allow to cool and then blend or mash until smooth.
6. Serve with the rice cakes and pepper slices.

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Rice cakes with mushroom pâté and cherry tomatoes



Dairy-free • Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 32p per portion

Ingredients

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 50g rice cake and pâté, and 40g cherry tomatoes.

 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

 1/2 small onion, peeled and finely diced

 1/2 teaspoon garlic paste

 150g mushrooms, peeled and diced

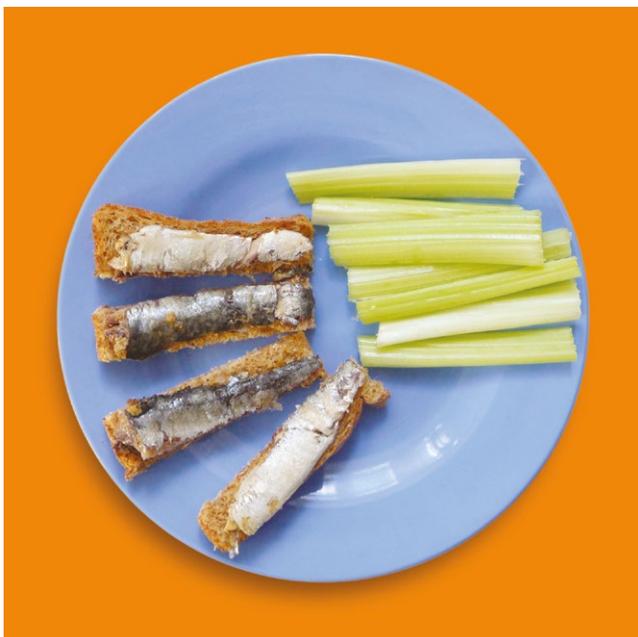
 4 rice cakes

 160g cherry tomatoes, cut in half

Method

1. Heat the oil in a frying pan. Fry the onions, garlic and mushrooms until they are soft.
2. Once cooked, place the mushroom mixture into a blender and blend until smooth, or push through a sieve or mash with a fork.
3. Serve with the rice cakes and cherry tomatoes.

Sardines on toast with celery



Dairy-free • Egg-free

Cost: 41p per portion

Ingredients

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 25g wholemeal toast, 30g sardines, and 40g celery.

 1 can (120g) sardines in olive oil

 4 large slices wholemeal bread

 Juice of 1/2 lemon

 2 sticks celery, washed and cut into finger-sized sticks

Method

1. Drain the excess oil from the sardines.
2. Toast the bread and place the sardines on top.
3. Cut each slice into four pieces.
4. Squeeze over a little lemon juice.
5. Serve with the celery sticks.

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Yoghurt with chopped banana and blueberries

Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian

Cost: 44p per portion

**Ingredients**

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 75g Greek yoghurt, 20g banana, and 20g blueberries.

300g Greek yoghurt

1/2 large or 1 small banana (80g), peeled and cut into fingers

1/3 punnet (80g) blueberries (Cut any large ones in half.)

Method

1. Spoon the yoghurt into small bowls and serve with the banana fingers and blueberries.

Wholemeal roll with almond butter and carrot sticks

Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 6p per portion

**Ingredients**

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 40g roll and almond butter, and 40g carrots.

2 wholemeal rolls (Make sure they are suitable for vegans if this is required.)

1 tablespoon almond butter

1 large carrot, washed, topped and tailed, peeled, and cut into sticks

Method

1. Cut the rolls in half and toast them lightly.
2. Spread with the almond butter.
3. Serve with the carrot sticks.

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Vegan fruit scone with strawberries

Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 36p per portion

**Ingredients**

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 30g fruit scone and spread, and 40g strawberries.

2 tablespoons plain white flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1 level tablespoon dairy-free spread

1 tablespoon unsweetened soya milk alternative

1 heaped tablespoon raisins

2 teaspoons dairy-free spread, to spread on the cooked scones

160g strawberries, washed, hulled and halved

Method

1. Heat the oven to 230°C / 450°F / Gas 6.
2. Sieve the flour and baking powder together in bowl. Add the first quantity of spread and mix together using fingers until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
3. Gradually add the milk alternative and then the raisins, to the breadcrumb mixture and mix to a sticky dough. Turn on to a floured board, and shape into a circle of dough about 4cm thick. Cut into two circles using a cutter.
4. Bake for 8-10 minutes until risen and browning.
5. When cooled, spread the scones with the second quantity of spread and serve with the strawberries.

Mashed egg with breadsticks and radishes

Vegetarian

Cost: 40p per portion

**Ingredients**

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 50g egg, 10g breadsticks and 40g radishes.

4 free-range eggs

8 breadsticks

20 radishes, washed and sliced

Method

1. Hard-boil the eggs, finely mash them and put into four small bowls.
2. Serve with the breadsticks, broken into finger-sized pieces, and the sliced radishes.

SNACK

1 to under-5 years

Wholemeal toast with pinto bean spread and carrot sticks

Dairy-free • Egg-free • Vegetarian • Vegan

Cost: 20p per portion



Ingredients

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 60g toast with pinto bean spread, and 40g carrots.

1/2 large can (400g) pinto beans (drained weight 120g)

1 tablespoon tahini (sesame seed) paste

1/2 teaspoon garlic paste

1 teaspoon lemon juice

Pinch black pepper

2 large slices wholemeal bread

1 large carrot, washed, topped and tailed, peeled, and cut into sticks

Method

1. To make the pinto bean spread, place the beans, tahini, garlic, lemon juice and pepper into a blender and blend to a paste. Or put them into a bowl and mash thoroughly with a potato masher.
2. Toast the bread, spread with the pinto bean spread, and cut into fingers.
3. Serve with the carrot sticks.

Sweet potato wedges and yoghurt dip

Egg-free • Gluten-free • Vegetarian

Cost: 30p per portion



Ingredients

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 50g potato wedges, and 25g yoghurt for dipping.

2 medium sweet potatoes

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

100g natural full-fat yoghurt

Method

1. Heat the oven to 200°C / 400°F / Gas 6.
2. Scrub the sweet potatoes and cut each one into eight wedges lengthways.
3. Put the sweet potatoes and oil into a bowl and mix together until the potatoes are coated.
4. Place the potato wedges on a baking tray in a single layer and bake for about 30 minutes, turning once after 15 minutes.
5. Allow to cool and then serve with the yoghurt.

Good sources of vitamins and minerals

Vitamin A

Animal sources

butter
canned salmon
cheese
egg
full-fat milk
herrings
kidney
liver
pilchards canned in
tomato sauce
smoked mackerel

Non-animal sources

apricots (dried, fresh or
canned)
blackcurrants
broad beans
broccoli
Brussels sprouts
cabbage (dark)
cantaloupe melon
carrots
honeydew melon
mango
nectarine
orange
peach
peas
prunes
red peppers
runner beans
spinach
sweet potatoes
sweetcorn
tomatoes
watercress
vegetable fat spread

Riboflavin

Also called vitamin
B2.

Animal sources

cheese
eggs
kidney
lean meat or poultry
mackerel
milk
pilchards
salmon
sardines
tuna
yoghurt

Non-animal sources

almonds
fortified breakfast cereals
granary bread
mushrooms
soya beans
spinach
wheatgerm bread

Folic acid

'Folic acid' is the
name given to the
synthetic form of the
B vitamins known as
folates, but is used
as a general term
here for this vitamin.

broccoli
Brussels sprouts
cabbage
cauliflower
fortified breakfast cereals
green leafy salads
melon
oranges
parsnips
peanuts
peas

potatoes
runner beans
spinach
tomatoes
wholemeal bread
yeast extract

<p>Calcium</p>	<p>Dairy sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • milk • cheese • cheese spread • yoghurt • fromage frais 	<p>Non-dairy sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • canned salmon • dried fruit • egg yolk • muesli • orange • peas, beans and lentils • pilchards, sardines • soya drink fortified with calcium • spinach • tofu • white bread / flour
<p>Iron</p>	<p>Animal sources</p> <p>All meat and meat products provide iron, but very good sources include darker meats and meat products made from beef, lamb, duck, venison, and offal meats such as heart, liver, kidney, oxtail and tongue.</p> <p>Oil-rich fish – including herrings, pilchards, sardines, salmon, whitebait and tuna – are also a good source of iron.</p> <p>Eggs (particularly egg yolk) are also a good source.</p>	<p>Non-animal sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • baked beans • blackcurrants • black-eyed peas • broad beans • broccoli • chickpeas • dried apricots • fortified breakfast cereals • lentils • raisins • soya beans • spinach and spring greens • tofu • weet bisks • bread and flour
<p>Iodine</p>	<p>Dairy sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • butter • cheese • fromage frais and yoghurt • milk 	<p>Non-dairy sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • egg • fish • fish paste • seaweed • shellfish
<p>Zinc</p>	<p>Animal sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • canned sardines • canned tuna or pilchards • cheese • cold cooked meats • eggs • ham • kidney • lean meat • liver • milk • poultry • shrimps and prawns 	<p>Non-dairy sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beans and lentils • brown or wholemeal bread • nuts • plain popcorn • sesame seeds • tofu • wholegrain breakfast cereals, such as puffed wheat, branflakes or weet bisks

Plates, bowls, snack boxes and drink bottles used in this resource

The photos below show the actual sizes of the plates, bowls and boxes used in the food photos in this resource. Most of the plates and bowls were sourced from RICE (www.rice.dk), a Danish brand of melamine crockery that can be obtained from a number of retailers in the UK. (Note that melamine cannot be used in a microwave oven.) The boxes and drinking bottles were sourced from Sistema (www.sistemaplastics.com) and can be bought in most supermarkets and homeware shops.

Plate

20cm





Finger food bowl

Size: 8cm
Depth: 3cm



Small square snack box

Size: 7cm x 7cm
Depth: 5cm



Drink bottle

Height: 15cm



Double snack box

Size: 10cm x 17cm

Depth: 3cm



Small rectangular snack box

Size: 7cm x 10cm

Depth: 2.5cm

Large square snack box

Size: 12cm x 12cm

Depth: 4cm



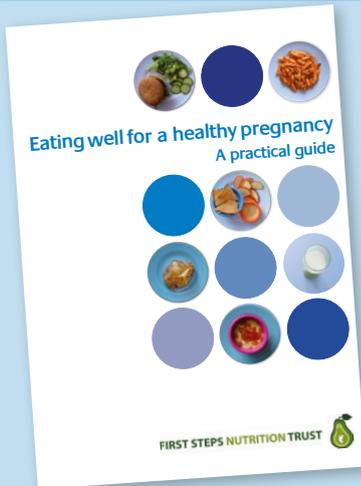
First Steps Nutrition Trust – Useful resources

The information in all our resources is in line with current policy and has been reviewed by experts in the field.

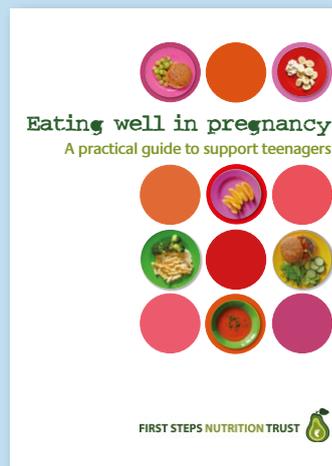
All our resources are available as free pdfs to download at www.firststepsnutrition.org

Hard copies are available at cost price from <https://firststepsnutrition.company.site/>

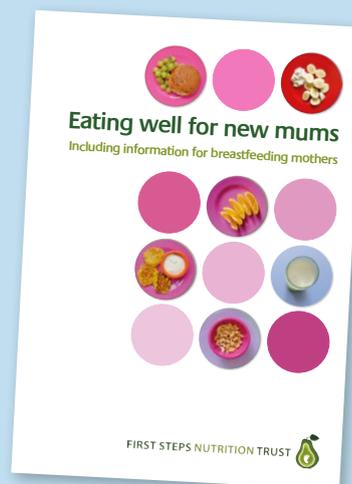
Supporting women in pregnancy and new mums



This guide enables health professionals to support pregnant women about food, nutrition and pregnancy. It includes recipes and meal ideas and can sit alongside other local public health guidance to provide a practical explanation of what 'eating well' looks like in practice.

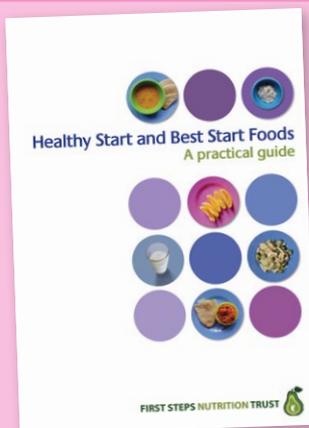


This practical guide illustrates what a good diet looks like for young women in pregnancy. The advice is tailored to women aged 15-19 years and provides practical ideas on how to eat well cost-effectively. It includes photos and recipes, all of which have been tested and costed.



This resource encourages all new mums to eat well and summarises current thinking on food, nutrition and breastfeeding. It provides photos and recipes for a range of simple, nutritious light meals and snacks perfect for busy mums on the go.

Supporting low-income families

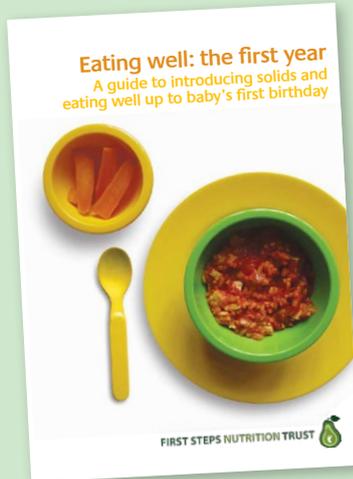


This resource explains the Healthy Start scheme (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Best Start Food scheme (in Scotland) and how families eligible for these schemes can be supported. This resource gives examples of how the monetary allowances can be spent, with recipes and advice for health professionals who support families in their areas.

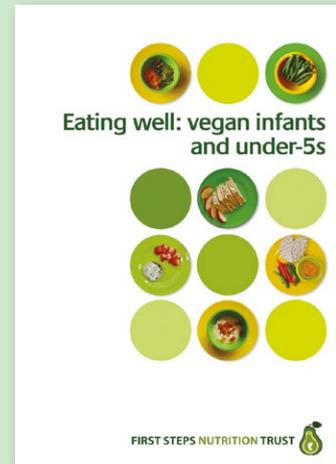


Simple cost-effective recipes for the whole family and tips on how to eat well on a budget and with limited equipment. Recipes show how adults, teenagers, school-aged children, under-5s and infants can all eat well from the same recipes.

Supporting new families

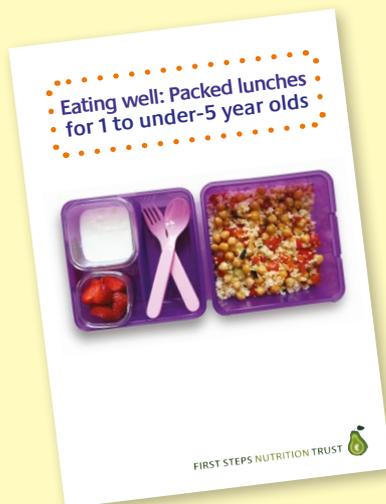


This resource explains how to safely introduce solids and how to encourage eating well in the second six months of life. The resource provides recipes, suggested portion sizes and lots of practical tips.



This resource summarises how vegan infants (and their mums) and children under 5 can be supported to eat well. It provides simple, cost-effective and tested recipes that can be used in early years settings or in the home, and clear information on how to support vegan dietary choices.

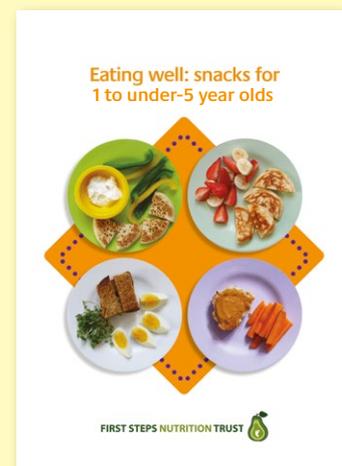
Supporting 1 to under-5 year olds and early years settings



This guide outlines how families and early years settings can prepare packed lunches which meet the energy and nutrient needs of young children, using cost-effective choices that meet a wide range of needs.



This pictorial guide shows the sorts of foods, and amounts of foods that can be offered to 1 to under-5 year olds to encourage eating well as part of a healthy meal plan.



This resource gives information on healthy snacks to give to 1 to under-5 year olds.



FIRST STEPS NUTRITION TRUST



www.firststepsnutrition.org

Eating well: snacks for 1 to under-5 year olds

ISBN e-book 978-1-908924-52-0

ISBN printed copy 978-1-908924-51-3