

HEALTHY BODIES, HEALTHY MINDS

Healthy Eating

Breastmilk is the normal food for babies



- Babies need only breastmilk for the first 6 months of life.
- Continue breastfeeding for up to 2 years and beyond with the addition of iron-rich solid foods when baby is around 6 months old and showing signs of readiness.
- Mother, baby, family, community and the environment all benefit from breastfeeding.
- Breastfeeding promotes healthy eating habits for life.
- You have the right to breastfeed anytime, anywhere.



Enjoy a variety of foods, including lots of vegetables and fruit

- Enjoy foods that are as close to their natural state as possible, every day.
- Choose local and seasonal foods, as much as possible.
- Develop your cooking skills and share them with others.
- Cook at home more often to limit processed foods, which often have added salt, sugar or fat.
- Use oils, fats, sugar and salt in small amounts when seasoning and cooking.
- Choose these foods more often:
 - * colourful fruit and vegetables,
 - * whole grains,
 - * lean meat and alternatives, and
 - * lower fat milk and alternatives
- Balance your meals. Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit, $\frac{1}{4}$ with grain products, and $\frac{1}{4}$ with meat and alternatives. Add a glass of milk and water to complete your meal.

Choose water if you're thirsty

- Make water your first choice. Both juice and sugar-sweetened beverages have a lot of sugar and offer few nutrients.
- Pay attention to the first signs of thirst and drink plenty of water. Drink more water in hot weather or when you are active.



Listen to your body's signs of hunger and fullness



- Take the time to enjoy the taste of your food.
- Eat meals and snacks at regular times. Try to eat without distraction, and in the company of others.
- Focus on the nutrients in foods - not the number of calories.
- Enjoy food; its flavours, colours, textures, social aspect and role in celebrations.
- Recognize that food choices go beyond willpower and are influenced by our environments (e.g., donuts in the break room, chocolate bar fundraisers).
- Make the healthier choice the easier choice where you live, learn, work and play (e.g., replace donuts with fresh fruit; have vegetables washed, cut and ready to eat).



Practice safe food handling to prevent foodborne illness; separate, clean, cook and chill

- Clean hands and surfaces such as cutting boards, knives and countertops often. Wash hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap both before and after handling food.
- To avoid cross contamination, use separate cutting boards, surfaces and utensils for raw meat, poultry and seafood than what is used for other foods.
- Cook foods to the proper internal temperatures to ensure harmful bacteria are killed.
- Chill foods to 4°C or less. After cooking, cool foods quickly by putting them in smaller and shallower containers. Chilling foods quickly will keep bacteria from multiplying.

Resources:

[Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit: Healthy Eating](#)

[Dietitians of Canada](#)

[Best Start: Breastfeeding](#)

[UnlockFood.ca](#)