



NHS South of Tyne and Wear

# Encouraging **Good Eating** for your child



Gateshead Primary Care Trust  
South Tyneside Primary Care Trust  
Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust

# ■ Preparing for Good Eating

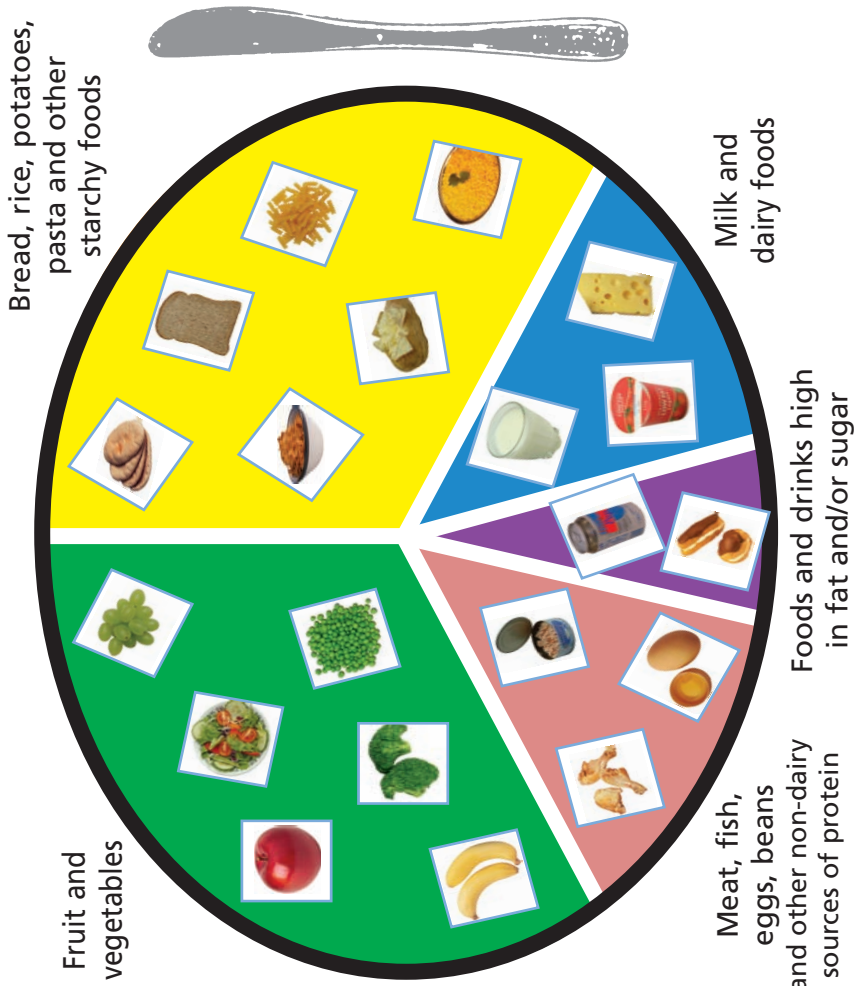
This leaflet is about encouraging good eating for your child. Your child's development from breast or artificial / formula feeding to sharing in the family meal is one of the first stages of growing up.

Children need a healthy balanced diet rich in fruit, vegetables and bread, potatoes, rice, pasta and cereals. Encourage your child to choose a variety of foods to help make sure they get the wide range of nutrients they need to stay healthy. Please see The eatwell plate guide on page 2.

Let it happen at its own pace, and if you have any worries talk to your health visitor or GP.



# The eatwell plate



## Key

Message
Eat lots
Eat lots
Eat & drink moderately
Eat moderately
Eat sparingly





*Show your child how to eat healthily*

NB Shows example of food and drinks that would make a healthy balanced diet



## ■ Encouraging Good Eating

All children need to have a healthy balanced diet. Here are some helpful tips to encourage healthy eating for your child.

1. Encourage eating as a family this can help your child to develop a positive approach to food.
  2. Offer new foods in very small portions.
  3. Where possible allow children to be involved in food preparation.
  4. Make eating fun - e.g. cut food up into patterns or small bits.
  5. If they want to eat a narrow range of food let them, this can be healthy if it covers the main food groups. (See page 2)
  6. Keep meal preparation quick and easy, so you can accept it without anger if they won't eat what you have made for them.
  7. Continue to offer foods that have been rejected on a regular basis as tastes do change.
  8. Give yourself time and be relaxed.
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## ■ Maintaining Good Eating

You have offered your child only a small amount of food, and they still won't eat. What do you do?

- 1.** You should not shout or nag your child to eat.
- 2.** You should not press food on your child. If the food doesn't seem to be wanted, wait and try again later.
- 3.** You should not bribe your child to eat their meal.
- 4.** You should not punish your child.
- 5.** When your child does eat well or tries something new, give them lots of praise and cuddles.

You could try leaving your child's food on the table for 10 minutes or until the rest of the family have finished their meal, calmly ask once more if they want to eat it.

If your child does not eat their food don't worry your child will be more willing to eat their next meal.

Once you have cleaned the food away do not give the food back (if your child asks). If you do your child will know that they can play games with you.

Most children know when they have had enough to eat.

## ■ Meal Time Routine

Children from an early age can usually start to join in the family meal times.

Aim for three meals a day and also healthy snacks such as fruit in between meals.

Encourage your child to sit as a family at meal times whenever possible.

You are the best role model for your child, if you eat well your child is also likely to eat well.



## ■ Snacks

If your child is not eating very much at meal times, do not allow them to fill up on sweets, biscuits, crisps etc in between meals.

A small piece of fruit or veg could be given mid-morning, e.g. carrot stick, celery, apple.

Even healthy snacks can put children off their main meals if given too close to meal times.

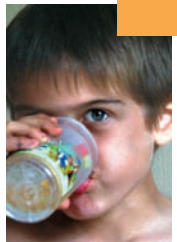
Once your child starts eating better at mealtimes then you can start to introduce a mid-morning or mid-afternoon snack.

## ■ Drinks

Can cause the stomach to feel full and make you feel less hungry - continuously drinking throughout the day will keep your child's stomach feeling full and not as hungry.

It is best to give your child milk or water. Fizzy drinks, sweetened squashes, juices and sweetened milk drinks are harmful to teeth, especially when taken between meals.

One pint (six to eight cups) of water per day is sufficient for your child.



# Don't Worry!

The following things are very common in young children and are generally not a cause for concern.

- It is quite normal for children to go for a few days without eating much at all, and then seem to have a huge appetite the next day.
- It can be normal for children to lose their appetite. When they are poorly - continue to offer small amounts of food and drinks and they will catch up when feeling better.

**If you have any worries, talk to your Health Visitor or GP.**

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