

# GROWING LEAPS AND BOUNDS<sup>®</sup>

SERIES: 9 OF 12



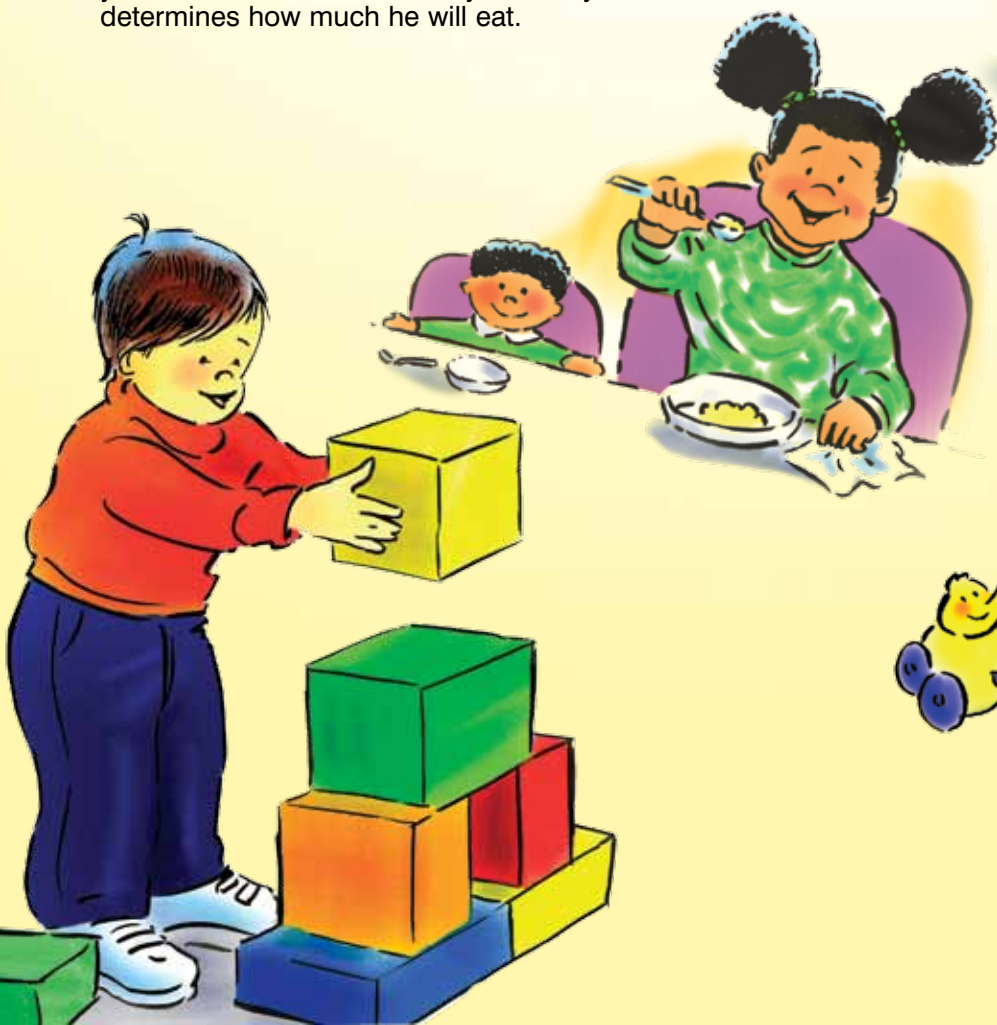
A GUIDE TO HEALTHY FEEDING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FROM INFANCY TO PRESCHOOL YEARS

## TERRIFIC TWO

Your two-year-old needs plenty of opportunity to exercise his growing muscles, build his coordination, and work off his boundless energy. As he becomes more independent, he will test his limits, so be firm and consistent in what you will and won't allow him to do.

### Until Your Next Well-Child Visit...

- Try to serve three healthy meals and two healthy snacks each day.
- Make sure your toddler gets plenty of time for indoor and outdoor activities, especially those that help develop his motor skills; minimize TV.
- Keep in mind that your role is to determine what your toddler should eat, and your two-year-old determines how much he will eat.



## BUILDING GOOD EATING HABITS

1 Remember that your job is to purchase and prepare foods that you want your child to eat at home. Your child will determine how much he will eat.

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2 Decide when you will or will not compromise your food choices. As your child gets older and sees what other children eat, he may ask for foods that you prefer not to serve.

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3 Serve meals and snacks at predictable times each day.

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4 Set a pleasant tone for mealtime. Save discussions of stressful matters for later.

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5 Build your two-year-old's social skills and manners by complimenting his skills and desirable behaviors, and ignoring small missteps. Here are a few examples: "I like the way you are sitting so nicely with us at the table." "Wow, you are using your spoon so well." "You tried a pea, good job." "Thank you for listening to Daddy's story without interrupting."

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6 Continue to offer a variety of different foods, including foods your two-year-old has rejected in the past.

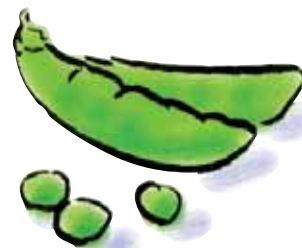
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7 Expect your two-year-old to sit pleasantly for about 15 to 20 minutes. Watch for cues that he is finished eating – dawdling, whining, fidgeting, playing with food. If your child shows these signs after 15 minutes, excuse him.

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8 When appropriate, encourage your two-year-old to serve himself and eat with child-size forks and spoons. This will help boost his confidence and also allow him to listen to his appetite.

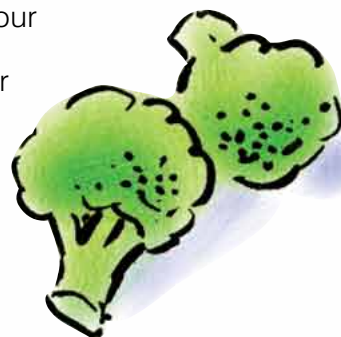
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## SMART STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING PICKY EATING

You can't totally prevent picky eating – it's a normal part of your two-year-old's development. However, your actions and reactions can make it less problematic and disruptive.

- Serve foods without sauces so that your two-year-old tastes their natural flavor. Don't feel like you need to add sugar to fruit or always offer ketchup or dressing for dunking vegetables.
- Focus on your two-year-old's mealtime accomplishments, like trying new foods.
- Decide what you want to serve and stick with it. Cooking a separate meal for your toddler only reinforces pickiness because your two-year-old learns that she can get the food she wants.
- Be firm but gentle when your two-year-old makes unreasonable demands, like wanting only dessert at mealtime. Explain your position once in simple, unemotional terms and don't give in to your two-year-old's persistence or tantrums.
- Set a good example by eating the same foods that you serve to your two-year-old. Avoid calling undue attention to foods that you want her to eat, like vegetables. Say "Here is a piece of broccoli," rather than "Look, Mommy and Daddy are eating their broccoli."



## EATING OUT

Kids typically love to eat out – they love new experiences and places. However, for parents, it can be challenging to find healthy foods for children in restaurants. Here are some ideas.

- 1 Ask your server for a healthy side dish like a fruit cup, salad, or steamed vegetables. Many children's menu choices are high in fat and low in nutrition.
- 2 Watch portion sizes – a good benchmark is one tablespoon per year of life. If portions are too large, split one entrée between two children or ask for a take-out container.
- 3 Set a pleasant tone for mealtime. Save discussions of stressful matters for later.
- 4 Ask that bread and beverages be served with the meal, not before.
- 5 Ask for a child-size portion for dessert or several extra spoons so the whole table can share.
- 6 Choose carefully if you visit fast-food restaurants. When you do visit one, order fruit and lowfat or fat-free milk instead of fries and a soft drink. Avoid fried foods like fries or onion rings, or order just one portion for the family to share.
- 7 Bring a baggie with healthy snacks like dry cereal, sliced apples, or crackers with you. When toddlers are hungry, they don't know how to wait patiently for their food.



## A FEW WORDS ABOUT FEEDING SAFETY

- Teach your two-year-old to wash his hands well before eating, and also after playing outside or using the toilet. Sing the ABC song while washing your hands so that he washes long enough – he will learn his ABCs as well!
- If your child has food allergies, alert his teachers and childcare providers about foods he should not eat, and about what to do if he has a reaction. When your child goes to another child's home, talk to the parent or caregiver about your child's allergy and approved foods.

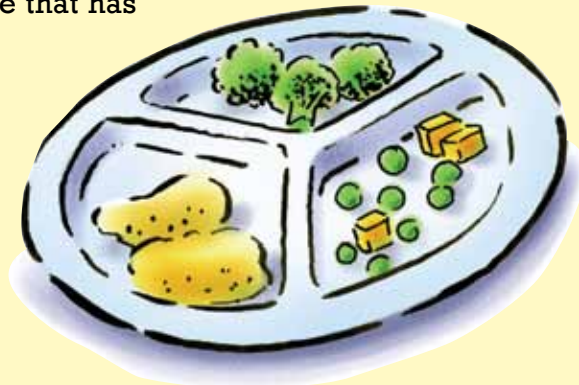


## POTTY TRAINING TIME

Within the coming year or so, your two-year-old probably will be ready for potty training. Pay attention to her current bowel movement routine, including usual time of day and number of daily bowel movements. Be sure your toddler's diet includes fruits, vegetables, and foods made with whole grains – they're good sources of fiber. Encourage your two-year-old to drink enough fluids, mainly lowfat or fat-free milk and water. Daily physical activity helps promote regular bowel movements.

## HELPFUL HINTS

- Do not expect your child to finish everything on the plate. Appetites can vary from day to day.
- Give your two-year-old a plastic plate that has sections for different foods. Some two-year-olds may find it easier to eat with child-size utensils from a plate with a high edge.
- During toothbrushing, hold your two-year-old's hand and help move the toothbrush the correct way. Put no more than a pea-sized drop of toothpaste on the brush. Two-year-olds are not very good at spitting out toothpaste just yet.

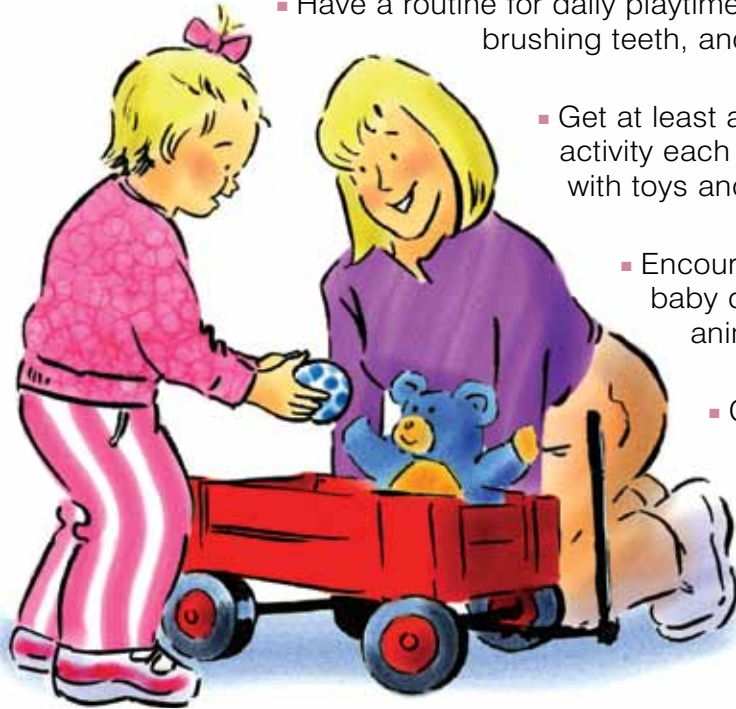


## YOUR TWO-YEAR-OLD IS MORE ACTIVE THAN EVER – RUNNING, CLIMBING, AND EXPLORING EVERYTHING.

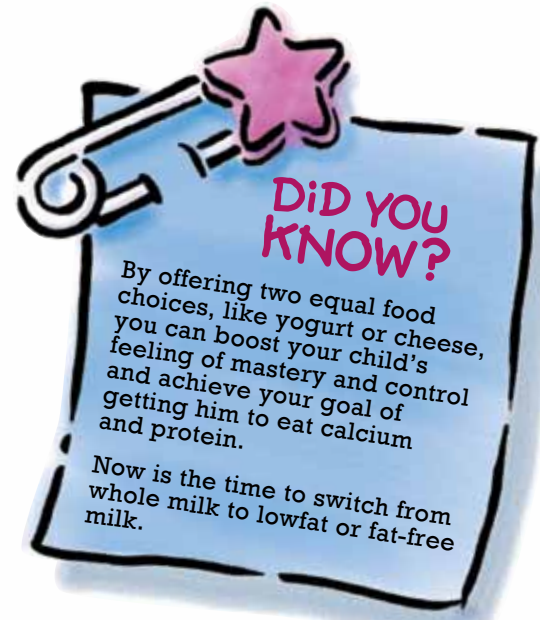
In the coming year, he may learn to jump up and down, throw a ball overhand, build a tall tower of blocks, walk backwards, and even balance on one foot.

Run, jump, and climb with your child indoors or outdoors; playing is great fun when Mom or Dad joins in. Watch your two-year-old carefully while he plays. Two-year-olds are naturally curious and can't tell the difference between safe and dangerous.

- Have a routine for daily playtime like you do for bathing, brushing teeth, and going to bed.
- Get at least an hour of structured and unstructured activity each day. Set aside plenty of time for playing with toys and friends.
- Encourage your two-year-old to fill a wagon or baby doll stroller with toys, dolls, or stuffed animals to take on a walk.
- Choose activities that your two-year-old can master so that he feels good about himself. Follow his lead – he will find new ways to play with you.
- Play with toys that can be taken apart and put back together, like puzzles and large interlocking plastic blocks.



- Talk to your two-year-old during playtime, naming and describing toys and objects around him. Give him one-step directions like "Throw the red ball to me." This helps him develop his language and motor skills.
- Provide balls of different sizes and colors for throwing and kicking.
- Teach your two-year-old "chase" games like tag and hide-and-seek.
- Dance and sing together to your child's favorite music.
- Make your own toys, like stacking cups out of plastic containers and musical instruments out of pie tins and wooden spoons.



### DID YOU KNOW?

By offering two equal food choices, like yogurt or cheese, you can boost your child's feeling of mastery and control and achieve your goal of getting him to eat calcium and protein.

Now is the time to switch from whole milk to lowfat or fat-free milk.

## TIME-SAVING WAYS TO EAT HEALTHFULLY

**You're busy.** In addition to keeping up with your active two-year-old, you have other family members and yourself to care for. Here are a few time-saving tips to help you prepare nutritious family meals quickly:

- Purchase bagged, pre-cut vegetables, like lettuce, baby carrots, and broccoli florets. Or get an assortment of vegetables from your market's salad bar.
- For a quick meal, heat up two to four cups of chicken broth and add one cup each of frozen vegetables, small size pasta, and beans. Cook until pasta is ready, season to taste, and serve.
- Some two-year-olds enjoy eating frozen vegetables as a snack!
- Build the family's meal around a healthy prepared dish, like roasted chicken from the supermarket deli section. Use the leftover chicken for a quick stir-fry dinner the next day.
- Buy quick-cooking whole grains like brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, and whole-wheat couscous.
- On the weekend, prepare a pasta dish, casserole, or stew that can be frozen. Wrap well in foil, label, and date. Reheat and serve at a later time. Always make enough for leftovers!
- Keep a box of shelf-stable, lowfat milk in the pantry just in case you run out of refrigerated milk.



Always talk with your baby's doctor when you have questions about your baby's growth, development, and overall health. Ask which situations should prompt an immediate phone call, a visit to the office, or a trip to the emergency room.

The Dannon Institute is a non-profit foundation dedicated to promoting research, education, and communication about the link between nutrition and good health. "Growing Leaps and Bounds™" was created to help build a solid foundation of healthy eating and activity for your child, now and for the future. The Dannon Institute is supported by The Dannon Company, Inc.

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