

# THE FIVE FOOD GROUPS

Each food group has different nutrients which your child's body uses to grow and work well. That's why we need to eat a range of foods from all five food groups.

When baby starts eating family foods it is a good time to review how the whole family eats too.



Water is the healthiest and cheapest drink for children over 12 months.

Finger foods can be given as soon as your baby can sit by themselves. Cut food into small pieces so they are easy for your baby to pick up. Finger foods are great to pack for baby to eat when you are away from home. Always supervise baby when they are eating new foods.



**Vegetables:** keep our bodies healthy, fight disease and avoid constipation. Eat lots of different coloured vegetables!



**Fruit :** keep our bodies healthy, fight disease and avoid constipation. Go for the rainbow of fruits!



**Grains (wholegrains):** gives children the energy they need to grow, develop and learn.



**Meats and alternatives:** rich in protein which is important for muscle growth and development, and other body functions.



**Dairy (full-fat) and alternatives:** rich in calcium, great for bones and teeth

- Main drinks: breastmilk or infant formula until around 12 months
- From 12 months full-cream pasteurised cow's milk and breastmilk (if they are continuing to be breastfed).
- Toddler milks are not necessary.
- *Milk alternatives:* check for calcium-fortified (>100mg calcium per 100ml). Consider soy, oat, almond or rice.



**Eat the rainbow of foods!**

# How to eat all 5 Food Groups:

Food group	Foods included	Food ideas
<b>Vegetables</b> 	Cucumber, tomato, lettuce, potato, pumpkin, carrot, corn, broccoli, cauliflower, many more and legumes like chickpeas and beans! Try different colours, tastes, textures that are fresh, frozen or canned (reduced-salt).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyday family meals</li> <li>• Rice cakes with avocado and tomato</li> <li>• Baked beans</li> <li>• Savoury pikelets with grated carrot, zucchini, corn and cheese</li> </ul>
<b>Fruit</b> 	Apples, oranges, bananas, pears, berries, watermelon, grapes, plums, apricots, kiwi fruit, and many more! Fresh, frozen or canned (no syrup).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pikelets or fruit toast with berries and yoghurt</li> <li>• Fresh fruit pieces</li> <li>• Homemade smoothie</li> <li>• Canned fruit and custard</li> </ul>
<b>Grains (wholegrain)</b> 	Bread, pasta, rice, noodles, breakfast cereals, couscous, rice, quinoa, polenta, oats and barley. Wholegrain options give your child longer-lasting energy and keep them feeling fuller for longer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toasted cheese sandwich with other fillings (i.e., baked beans, tomato)</li> <li>• Spaghetti Bolognese or fried rice</li> <li>• Zucchini and egg slice with rice</li> <li>• Fish or tofu stir fry with noodles</li> <li>• Corn thins with dip and thinly sliced veg</li> </ul>
<b>Meat or alternatives</b> 	Lean meat (beef, pork, turkey, kangaroo, goat, lamb), fish, chicken, eggs, beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, nuts and seeds. These foods also contain other useful vitamins and minerals like iron, zinc, vitamin B12 and omega-3 fatty acids. Iron and omega-3 fatty acids from red meat and oily fish are particularly important for brain development and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roast chicken with vegetables</li> <li>• Scrambled eggs</li> <li>• Cottage pie</li> <li>• Tuna pasta bake</li> <li>• Boneless fish pieces</li> <li>• Tofu pieces with vegetables</li> <li>• Meatballs</li> </ul>
<b>Dairy (full fat) and alternatives</b> 	The best source is pasteurised full cream milk, cheese and yoghurt. Milk alternatives which are calcium-fortified (soy, full-fat rice and oat milk) are suitable if they contain at least 100mg calcium per 100ml.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homemade fruit smoothie</li> <li>• Glass of plain milk</li> <li>• Yoghurt with fruit or on pikelets or fruit toast</li> <li>• Cheese sticks</li> <li>• Yoghurt on other meals i.e. cottage pie</li> </ul>
<b>Healthy fats</b> 	Avocado, olive oil, nut and seed butters. Use in small amounts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avocado on rice/corn thins</li> <li>• Olive oil used in cooking i.e. omelette</li> <li>• Nut and seed butters with fruit and vegetable pieces</li> <li>• Nut and seed butters on toast</li> </ul>

If you have any concerns about your child, contact your local [Child and Family Health Nurse service](#), [Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health Service \(AMIHS\)](#) | [Building Strong Foundations \(BSF\) for Aboriginal Children, Families and Communities](#), or GP.



Health  
Hunter New England  
Local Health District



HNEkidshealth  
Children, Young People & Families



Healthy Beginnings for HNEkids acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, live and gather, recognising their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging, as well as Aboriginal people who have provided valuable guidance to the development of this project.