

1927

## EC968 Revised 1927 Food for the Preschool Child

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Nebraska  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK  
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS  
U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating  
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

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FOOD FOR THE PRESCHOOL CHILD

From the very beginning of life the child who is to develop normally must have sufficient and suitable food. The baby's future depends greatly upon the way he is fed and cared for during the first year of life.

Breast feeding helps the child more than any other one thing. The breast feedings should come at regular three hour intervals or a similar schedule suggested by the doctor. The six months normal babe needs in addition to this breast feedings, an antirachitic factor such as cod liver oil or sun baths and an anti-scorbutic food such as orange juice or tomato juice. The orange juice and cod liver oil should be arranged to precede some of the feedings. It has been recommended to give one half teaspoon of cod liver oil twice a day some time during the latter part of the first month. This amount gradually increases as the child grows older. At the beginning of the second month orange juice may be given. Dilute one teaspoonful of the juice with one teaspoonful warm water and give between the two morning feedings. These quantities may be increased so that at the age of three months the child is getting one tablespoonful of orange juice and one tablespoonful of warm water.

Direct sun baths are desirable for all babies and may be started by the third or fourth week. Window glass cuts out the ultra-violet rays which protect against rickets.

In warm weather a mother gives a child sun baths out of doors. At first, the hands and face are exposed for ten or fifteen minutes. After a few days the arms and legs may be exposed and finally the whole body.

In the winter time, windows may be opened in a warm room and so arranged that the child does not feel any draft. The baby must lie in the path of the sunlight coming through the open space.

At the age of six months the child should be on a four hour feeding schedule. Water in which vegetables have been cooked may be given in small amounts at this time. Solid foods may gradually be given after this. These solid foods may be cereals, vegetables, fruit and egg yolk. The cereals such as oatmeal, cream of wheat and farina may be used at first. These should be cooked at least two hours in a double boiler then put thru a sieve and served thick without any milk or sugar. For the vegetables, carrots and spinach are preferable. These should be cooked in a small amount of salt water until tender and then put thru a sieve. With any of these foods one should begin with a very small amount which should be not more than a ~~teaspoonful~~ and then gradually increased to two or three tablespoons which should be given just before nursing. New foods should not only be given in small amounts but only one new food should be added to the diet at a time.

At the age of eight months additional cereals such as cream of barley, sims, pettijohn, and cream of rye may be used so as to add variety to the child's diet. Beef, mutton, and chicken broth with the fat skimmed off may also be given.



Crisp foods should also be added to the diet so that a child will begin to learn to know that his teeth are to masticate his foods. The bread should be two days and toasted thoroly in an oven until an even brown.

A breast fed baby that is happy, active, gaining in weight and sleeping well, will be easily weaned at nine months. The weaning time should not fall during the hot weather. It is better to begin earlier than nine months to avoid this.

The weaning should begin gradually using one feeding a day of modified cow's milk (5 oz. milk, 3 oz. water and 1 t. barley flour. Cook barley flour in water) until the baby's stomach is digesting it perfectly. Increase to two feedings and gradually substitute the artificial food so that at ten months the weaning is completed. A baby may be weaned to a cup and spoon but the bottle is preferable because the child will drink more slowly and the mother can tell more accurately just how much the child has taken.

Cow's milk from tuberculin tested cows, or goat's milk, kept clean, cool and fresh, is the best substitute for mother's milk. It is wise to take milk from a mixed herd or several cows. It should not be too high in fat content, 4% being sufficient. Holstein milk is preferable until the child is at least two years old. If proprietary food and condensed milk are used, they should be used only to sweeten the milk. Larger amounts should be avoided because they do not furnish bone and muscle building material. They contain a large amount of carbohydrate which causes excess fat for the child.

The following are good examples of regular feedings and foods during and just after weaning:

- 6 A.M. breast feeding
- 10 A.M. cereal, toast and milk (4 oz.)
- 2 P.M. mashed carrots, baked potatoes, baked apples  
and breast feeding.
- 6 P.M. vegetables, toast, milk (4 oz.)
- 10 P.M. breast feeding

A month later, which represents a diet for the age of 10 to 11 months, the time of feedings to be given and foods vary a little from the above. Here is a good schedule:

- 7:30 A.M. cereal, toast milk (8 oz.)
- 12:00 M. Vegetable, egg yolk, baked potato, baked apple
- 3:30 P.M. orange juice, small piece of toast
- 6:00 P.M. vegetable, toast, milk (8 oz.)

At the age of twelve months additional foods such as string beans, peas, cauliflower, and asparagus put thru a sieve may be added. Egg yolk, two or three times a week, may also be added and thin cream may be used on the cereals, if the baby is not too fat.

During the early part of the second year, bread, at least a day old, and butter or jelly may be occasionally given at breakfast instead of toast. Crisp fried bacon may also be an additional breakfast food. Other meats such as scraped beef, well cooked beef, mutton, lamb chops, chicken or fish (baked or broiled) may be used for the noon meal. All the meats should be finely cut or divided before feeding to the baby. Only small amounts should be given.



To prepare scraped beef, use meat from round steak, free from fat. Place on a board and scrape with a silver spoon, scraping with the grain. Shape one tablespoon of pulp into a patty and broil on a hot spider, then season with butter and salt (no pepper) Do not cook too long. Remember no fried foods should be given except bacon.

The variety of vegetables may be increased at this time by the use of summer squash, beet greens, swiss chard, stewed celery and stewed tomatoes. Fruit pulp such as peaches, apricot, pear, plum, pineapple and prunes may also be used. The fruit should be only slightly sweetened.

The following gives a schedule for a child's diet at the age of 2 years:

7:30 A.M. cereal with thin cream, toast, crisp fried bacon, milk (8 oz.)  
12:00 M. vegetables, meat or fish or egg, stewed fruit  
3:30 P.M. orange juice, toast or bread a day old and butter  
6:00 P.M. cereal with thin cream, toast or bread and butter, milk.

Eggs should be soft cooked or poached. Fried eggs should never be given to a child. Simple desserts such as custards, tapioca, junket, prunes, plain cake, and cookies may be given but always immediately after the meals and never between meals. Remember to give plenty of food at meal time and nothing between meals.

In addition to a good varied diet, a child at two years needs to sleep the clock round at night and have at least an hour's sleep during the day. If such a normal program is continued by the time the child reaches school age, he will not only have a series of good habits well formed but also show from his appearance and disposition that he is a well nourished child.

The education of mothers to longer and regular intervals between meals has greatly helped babies. After children cease to be babies, the mothers need to continue interest in their health. Nutrition work among school boys and girls too often proves that their food habits are not what a growing child should be practicing. Often the breakfast needs special attention because the pot of coffee and pancakes constitute the meal. This is not good for adults and is disastrous for the children. A warm cereal at a definite time is a distinct improvement. Then if the coffee is replaced by either milk or cocoa we have the beginning of a wholesome diet. We want children to refrain from tea and coffee because they are undesirable in themselves, but still more because when they are taken milk is omitted.

Parents frequently complain that their children refuse the kind of food they ought to have. Of course they do not realize that is because they have not trained them in food habits. Young mothers are often amazed that they have to teach their babies to eat from bottle, take orange juice, cereals, etc. Training in food habits is as truly educational work as training to read or write. One must repeat the reading lesson many times before a child realizes a word, and one must often repeat a food many times before it is acceptable as a regular part of the diet. It may mean persistence on the part of the mother but it pays in the long run.

Parents can influence children to eat foods that they need by setting good examples themselves. The only safe way is for parents to like and eat all foods they desire children to eat.



I heartily agree with you that it is a difficult task to break down a poor food habit and replace it with a good food habit but at the same time I insist it can be done. First, we must secure the interest of the child, give him some definite things to do and some ways of testing his progress. Weighing and measuring is an excellent way for a child to watch his progress. A child can be taught the reasons why his weights go up and down and what to do to make it go up. Often a child makes splendid struggles to increase his weight such as eating oatmeal, drinking milk and eating vegetables.

Irregularity as I have already said, is a great factor in underfeeding. By eating a little now and then, especially candy, ice cream cones, chocolate, etc., the appetite may be satisfied without the child having anywhere near the amount or kind of food he ought to have.

If health is too remote a reward and even promise of gain in weight makes no appeal, often some concrete reward will help - stars for example. When a child is ambitious for an unbroken row of stars he will steadfastly refuse coffee and demand milk. Thoughtful feeding of a child during his early period not only gives him a training that with supervision can be carried thruout the child's growing period but the work done in school will be done with less effort.

Every child has the right to be well born, well nourished and well cared for. I have emphasized the second one, that is, to be well nourished. To emphasize the third point, to be well cared for, I am quoting a part of the Children's Bureau Dodger No. 10, "What Do Growing Children Need?"

It says for the child's best growth and development:

First, shelter is needed. This means -

Decent, clean, well kept house.

Plenty of fresh air in the house, winter and summer.

Warm rooms in cold weather.

Separate bed with sufficient bedclothes to keep warm.

Pure, abundant water supply.

A comfortable place to welcome friends.

#### HAS YOUR CHILD THESE?

Second, food is needed. This means -

Clean, simple, appetizing, well cooked food.

The daily diet should include.

Milk, at least 1 pint a day.

Butter or some other form of fat.

Cereal and bread.

Green vegetables, especially leafy vegetables.

Fruit.

Egg, meat or fish. If no one of these three is used, an additional pint of milk should be given.

Three square meals a day.

Meals at regular hours and sufficient time for them.

Dinner at noon for children under 7 years of age.

#### HAS YOUR CHILD THESE?



Third, clothing is needed, This means -

- Clean, whole garments.
- Different clothing for day and night, suited to the climate.
- Change of underclothing and nightgown at least weekly.
- A change of stockings at least twice a week.
- Warm underclothings and stockings in cold climates.
- Heavy coat, cap, and mittens for cold weather.
- Shoes, free from holes, and long and wide enough.
- Food protection against rain or snow.

HAS YOUR CHILD THESE?

Fourth, health and personal habits are needed. This means -

- Bath every day, or at least once a week.
- Hands and face washed before meals and at bedtime.
- Natural bowel movement every day.
- Hands washed immediately after going to the toilet.
- Teeth brushed at least twice a day (morning and night).
- Regular bed hour.
- Ten hours of sleep at night, with open windows.
- Correct weight for height.

HAS YOUR CHILD THESE?

Fifth, play and companionship is needed. This means -

- A safe, clean, roomy place for outdoor and indoor play.
- At least two hours outdoor play every day.
- Constructive and suitable playthings and tools.
- Some one with sympathetic oversight to direct the play.
- The right sort of playmates.

HAS YOUR CHILD THESE?

Sixth, education and work is needed. This means -

- Schooling for at least nine months a year from 7 to 16.yrs of age.
- Not more than two hours of "chores" outside school hours.
- Not enough work either in school or out to cause fatigue.
- Vacation work, if any, must allow ample opportunity for the proper amount of rest and recreation.

HAS YOUR CHILD THESE?

Seventh, religion and moral training is needed. This means -

- Opportunity for religious training.
- Proper moral and spiritual influence in home.
- Teaching of standards of right and wrong in daily life.

HAS YOUR CHILD THESE?

Let me ask you two other questions. First, is your child getting a square deal? Second, if not, what are you going to do about it?

(Prepared by Florence J. Atwood)

Approved by Department of Home Economics.