

# EVIDENCE-BASED PORTION SIZES FOR 1-3 YEARS



A set of measuring spoons, including a tablespoon (15ml) and a teaspoon (5ml).

## Portion size ranges you can recommend with confidence

### INTRODUCTION

- There are no scientifically based portion sizes for 1-3 year olds
- Some toddlers overeat certain foods and become overweight/obese
- Some parents worry their toddlers do not eat enough
- Toddlers need a diet that meets their nutritional requirements for health, growth and development.



A first course of a quick-to-prepare toddler meal.



3 1/2 tablespoons of baked beans on toast.



3/4 tangerine.

### OBJECTIVES

- Provide portion ranges rather than specific sizes as toddlers eat larger amounts on some days and smaller amounts on others
- Propose scientifically based and peer-reviewed recommendations on food portions for toddlers that provide an adequate intake of nutrients and energy
- Address toddler obesity and parental anxiety around feeding toddlers
- Create practical guidance for healthcare professionals to guide those feeding toddlers, using standard 15ml tablespoons (tbsp) and standard 5ml teaspoons (tsp).

### CONCLUSIONS

- Evidence-based portion size ranges of common foods can be recommended to parents and carers of toddlers 1-3 years to address both overweight/obesity and parental anxiety
- Provides practical guidance for healthcare professionals, using standard measures that are easily translated for parents and carers
- Recommendations provide for individual toddler requirements and varying consumption of food at different times.



6 thick-cut chips.



3 small florets of broccoli.



120ml of milk.

### METHODOLOGY

- 1** Assessed portion sizes eaten by 1-3 year olds as reported in national surveys.
- 2** Proposed suitable portion size ranges in weights and household measures for this age group. Divided foods into food groups.
- 3** Analysed average nutrient and energy contributions of each food portion using standard dietary analysis software tool (Dietplan6).
- 4** Analysed daily combinations of these portion sizes to show they meet the Department of Health Recommended Nutrient Intakes (RNIs) and energy requirements for 1-3 year olds.

### PORTION SIZE RANGES FOR 1-3 YEAR OLDS

Food Group 1: Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods	Range of portion sizes
Bread	1/2 - 1 medium slice
Mashed potato	1 - 3 tbsp
Pasta (cooked)	2 - 5 tbsp
Rice	2 - 5 tbsp

  

Food Group 2: Fruit and vegetables	Range of portion sizes
Apple	1/4 - 1/2 medium apple
Broccoli / cauliflower	1 - 4 small florets or 1/2 - 2 tbsp
Clementine / tangerine / mandarin	1/2 - 1 fruit
Sweet corn	1/2 - 2 tbsp

  

Food Group 3: Milk, cheese and yogurt	Range of portion sizes
Cow's milk	100 - 120mls / 3-4oz
Grated cheese	2 - 4 tbsp
Yogurt	125mls (1 average pot)

  

Food Group 4: Meat, fish, eggs, nuts and pulses	Range of portion sizes
Baked beans in tomato sauce	2 - 5 tbsp
Chicken drumsticks	1/2 - 1 drumstick
Peanut butter	1/2 - 1 tbsp
Scrambled egg	2 - 4 tbsp
Tinned fish	1/2 - 1 1/2 tbsp

  

Food Group 5: Foods high in fat and sugar	Range of portion sizes
Crisps	4 - 6 crisps
Fruit crumble (e.g. apple or rhubarb)	2 - 4 tbsp
Honey / jam	1 tsp
Ice cream	2 - 3 heaped tbsp

These portion size ranges meet the UK Estimated Average Requirements (EAR) for energy and Reference Nutrient Intakes (RNIs) for toddlers