

## TODDLER

# Toddler Meal Plan 12–18 Months: 7-Day Guide With Recipes and Portions

Complete 7-day toddler meal plan for ages 12–18 months with breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snack ideas. Includes portion sizes and iron-rich meal focus.

## Key Takeaways

- At 12–18 months, toddlers transition from formula to whole cow's milk and from purees to soft family foods.
- The 7-day meal plan below provides approximately 1,000 calories per day across 3 meals and 2 snacks.
- Iron-rich foods (meat, lentils, fortified cereals) appear at every main meal to prevent the most common toddler deficiency.
- Every recipe uses simple ingredients and 15 minutes or less of active preparation.
- All foods are cut to safe sizes: pea-sized pieces or soft enough to squish between thumb and forefinger.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What should I feed a 12-month-old for breakfast?

Excellent 12-month breakfast options include scrambled egg with whole grain toast soldiers, baby oatmeal made with whole milk topped with mashed banana, whole grain pancakes with soft fruit, or full-fat yogurt with iron-fortified cereal and berries. Pair with 4–6 oz of whole milk.

### Can a 12-month-old eat the same food as the family?

Yes — with modifications. Most family foods can be made toddler-safe by cooking vegetables until soft, cutting meat into small pieces or shredding, reducing salt (cook the family's portion before adding salt), and avoiding the unsafe foods list (whole nuts, popcorn, honey before 12 months, whole round foods). Feeding your toddler family foods is the most effective way to broaden their diet.

### **How much milk should a 13-month-old drink?**

16–24 oz of whole cow's milk per day maximum. Serve milk at meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner and optionally one snack), not continuously throughout the day. More than 24 oz of milk crowding out solid foods is the most common cause of iron deficiency in toddlers this age.

### **What if my 12-month-old won't eat meat?**

Meat refusal is common. Shredded or minced meat mixed into pasta sauce or vegetables is often accepted when chunks are not. Alternatives for iron: lentils, chickpeas, black beans, tofu, scrambled egg, and iron-fortified cereals. Always pair plant-based iron with vitamin C to maximise absorption.

### **How do I know if my toddler ate enough at a meal?**

At 12–18 months, if your toddler ate more than a few bites and does not seem distressed, they likely ate enough. Toddlers are excellent self-regulators. Signs they are satisfied: turning their head away, closing their mouth, pushing the spoon away, or becoming distracted. Forcing additional food after these signals backfires.

### **Should meals look different from the baby food stage?**

Yes. At 12–18 months, meals should move away from purees entirely (unless used as sauce or mixture component) toward soft solid pieces that the toddler can self-feed. Textures should be soft enough to squish between your thumb and forefinger but have shape and structure — small pasta pieces, shredded meat, soft-cooked vegetable pieces, soft cheese cubes.

## **Sources**

1. Starting Solid Foods and Transitioning to Toddler Foods — [HealthyChildren.org](#) — AAP
2. Toddler Nutrition Guide — [CDC](#)
3. Iron in Toddlers — [CDC](#)
4. Dietary Guidelines 2020–2025 — [USDA](#)
5. Sample Menus for a 1-Year-Old — [HealthyChildren.org](#) — AAP