

# 2-year-old Feeding Milestones and Behaviors

Toddlers are growing and developing in many exciting ways. Below are some important feeding milestones to look for, behaviors to expect and signs the family may need to talk to the child's doctor.

## Important Feeding Milestones

### 1. Self-feeds and follows mealtime routines:

- ☐ Wants to feed him/herself without help
- ☐ Can scoop foods with a child-size spoon
- ☐ Starts successfully using a fork
- ☐ Drinks from an open cup by him/herself, using one hand
- ☐ Follows mealtime routines (initiates hand-washing before meals, helps set table or clean up, etc.)

### 2. Eats a wide variety of foods:

- ☐ Eats at least a few foods from every food group
- ☐ Sometimes tries new foods (but not always!)
- ☐ Accepts different textures, including fresh fruit and thinly sliced raw vegetables
- ☐ Sits down for 3 meals and 2 to 3 healthy snacks each day, with only water in between

### 3. Communicates about food:

- ☐ Uses words to communicate he/she is hungry, thirsty and full
- ☐ Names a variety of foods
- ☐ Shows food preferences and dislikes (which may change daily!)

## Normal behaviors may include:

- Asking for food between meals or snacks for reasons other than hunger (e.g., sees something he/she wants, he/she is bored, etc.)
- Throwing tantrums at times about foods and during meals (e.g., because he/she wants a treat, he/she doesn't want to turn off the TV or put away a toy for mealtime, etc.)
- Imitating other children's eating behaviors and preferences
- Being a little picky, such as sometimes refusing to try new foods, refusing to eat foods he/she once liked or refusing entire meals
- Being a little messy, playing with food and eating with hands
- Asking for the same food over and over again

### The family should talk to their child's doctor if:

- ✓ Child is not eating regular table foods
- ✓ Child still drinks from a bottle
- ✓ Child will eat no foods from 1 or more food groups
- ✓ Child eats fewer than 20 different foods
- ✓ Child becomes upset (crying and screaming) when presented with new foods
- ✓ Child loses feeding skills he/she once had
- ✓ Child regularly gags at meals
- ✓ Food or drink leaks out of his/her mouth while eating or drinking