



ARTICLE

Creative Menu Planning for Children

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3 mins read

Creative Food Ideas for your Child

How to make mealtimes interesting for children?

The kind of food your children eats influences their eating habits for the rest of their lives. Hence, moms keep coming up with creative food ideas and healthy meal plans for children. Creative menu planning that involves children in food related activities can give children positive experiences to associate with foods and may help influence their meal habits too.



Creative food ideas: Mix and match

Introducing new food ideas for your toddler can prove to be a daunting task. Here are a few ways you can achieve this:

- a) If you're introducing eggs for the first time, make it with interesting shapes and doll it up into faces to make the appearance more exciting for the child. Eggs are an important addition to a healthy menu for kids.
- b) Mash your veggies and add it to familiar foods like rice, parathas, pasta, scrambled eggs, sandwiches, khichri, or other snacks.
- c) For breakfast ideas for toddlers, you can cut fruits into small pieces or give them in the form of fresh home pressed juice (use the edible portion of the whole fruit to prepare the juice without addition of water, sugar etc). Other options are fruit milkshake, fruit salad or fruit custard.
- d) Offer new foods when your child is in a playful, happy mood - if he's cranky he's more likely to reject it.

- e) Be understanding if your child does not like a particular food. Try serving it in a different way few days later.
- f) Sit together as a family and enjoy your meals.
- g) Keep it innovative! For dinner ideas for toddlers, you could cut up veggies in different shapes every day and put together veggies of different colours. eg. Cucumber, carrot sticks, or rings
- h) While planning meal plan for kids, make sure your child has enough time to eat in every meal. They cannot eat as quickly as adults. It is also important to let your child eat as independently as possible, even if they make a mess.



Food options with essential nutrients

Providing your child with a nutrient-dense diet is important as children have small tummies but their nutrient needs are high. Here are a few healthy food options for your child:

- a) Plan to serve a variety of foods throughout the day and week. Be sure that the same foods are not offered too often, this calls for a weekly menu plan to be in place.
- b) Grains help in providing energy and can be incorporated in the diet in many interesting forms like whole-wheat rotis in the form of wraps & rolls, veggie pasta, pulse and rice combinations like idli, dosa, etc.
- c) Offer vegetables and fruits to your child daily and prefer fresh over frozen and canned varieties. The fibre content in vegetables and fruits will help keep your child full while ensuring good digestion.
- d) Milk, Yoghurt and Cheese provide necessary calcium, protein and can be flavoured to make it interesting. For example - adding nuts & dates to milk, chocolate milk, strawberry flavoured yoghurt or

any other season fruit can be used to make milk more appetizing.

e) Limit fried foods, high fat foods, sweets, and high sodium foods.