

Vitamin and Mineral Supplements

If your toddler eats a variety of foods and is growing well, she probably doesn't need extra vitamins or minerals, with 2 possible exceptions:

Vitamin D

Why your toddler needs it

To build healthy bones and teeth.

How much your toddler needs

A total of **600 IU** of vitamin D each day for children 12 months and over.



BE AWARE

- Talk with your health care provider before giving your toddler any supplement.
- Only give supplements approved for your child's age.
- Don't tell your child that supplements are candy. Keep them out of her reach.
- Don't give your toddler cod liver oil or other fish liver oils, which contain dangerous amounts of vitamin A.
- To prevent choking, only give your toddler gummies or chewable tablets after crushing or chopping them into small bits.

How to get it

A portion is available from sunshine, and the rest comes from eating certain foods.

- egg: 1 yolk = 25 IU
- soft margarine: 1 teaspoon (5 ml) = 25 IU
- salmon: 30 grams (1 oz) = 100 IU
- formula: 1 cup (250 ml) = 100 IU
- cow's milk (not recommended before 9 months): 1 cup (250 ml) = 100 IU

When a supplement is needed

Until she's 24 months old, give your toddler 400 IU of liquid vitamin D each day if she:

- breastfeeds, or drinks both human milk and formula
- breastfeeds and drinks some cow's milk or vitamin D-fortified goat's milk
- doesn't drink 2 cups of cow's milk or eat a variety of other vitamin D-rich foods every day
- drinks goat's milk that isn't fortified with vitamin D

After she's 24 months old, your toddler may need a supplement to reach the recommended 600 IU per day. Give her 400 IU of vitamin D each day if she doesn't have 2 cups of cow's milk or fortified soy beverage and a variety of other vitamin D-rich foods every day.

Iron

Why your toddler needs it

For growth and brain development.

How much your toddler needs

2 or more servings of iron-rich foods per day.

How to get it

From foods high in iron, including meat, poultry, fish, iron-fortified infant cereals, eggs, tofu, beans and other legumes.

When a supplement may be needed

Talk with your health care provider if your toddler:

- was premature
- doesn't eat enough iron-rich foods
- drinks more than 3 cups (750 ml) of milk each day
- is vegetarian or vegan (see [Vegetarian and Vegan Toddlers](#))

For more information about vitamin and mineral supplements, call a HealthLink BC dietitian at 8-1-1.