

Help! My Child Does Not Like to Eat Meat or Meat Alternatives

What are meat and meat alternatives?

The following foods are **examples of meat and meat alternatives**:

HEME IRON RICH*	NON-HEME IRON RICH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beef • Fish • Poultry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eggs • Legumes • Nuts and seeds • Peanut or nut butters • Tofu



*Heme iron rich sources are better absorbed.

Why are meat and meat alternatives important for my child's health?

Meat and alternatives are an excellent source of protein, iron, zinc and B vitamins.

Protein is a part of every cell in our bodies. It is the building block of our body and is important for growth. It also is important for a strong immune system to prevent and fight off infections. Most children get enough protein.

Iron is important because it carries oxygen to all our body parts. It also helps to prevent anemia (when the body does not have enough healthy red blood cells).

Zinc is needed for proper growth. It also helps our bodies fight infections.

B Vitamins offer several health benefits. For example, vitamin B12 helps keep our nervous system healthy.

How many servings of meat or meat alternatives does my child need?

Health Canada recommends the following servings of meat or meat alternatives per day for children:

AGE	NUMBER OF SERVINGS PER DAY
2 years to 8 years old	1 serving
9 years to 13 years old	1 to 2 servings
14 years to 18 years old	2 to 3 servings

Each of the following foods counts as **1 serving**:

- 125 mL (2 ½ oz or 75 g) cooked fish, shellfish, poultry or meat OR
- 175 mL (¾ cup) of cooked legumes OR
- 175 mL (¾ cup or 150 g) tofu OR
- 2 eggs OR
- 30 mL (2 tbs) peanut or nut butters OR
- 60 mL (¼ cup) shelled nuts and seeds

How can I make sure my child is getting enough meat or meat alternatives?

If your child does not like to eat meat now, this does not mean that they never will. Sometimes, kids just need things presented in different ways. Some kids do not like meat because of the texture, especially if it is too chewy or tough.

Continue to offer them meat or meat alternatives in small portions with family meals or at snack time. With time or as they get older, they may start accepting it. Do not force them to eat it.

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English: This information is important! If you have trouble reading this, ask someone to help you.

Italian: Queste informazioni sono importanti! Se ha difficoltà a leggere questo, chiedi aiuto a qualcuno.

Spanish: ¡Esta información es importante! Si tiene dificultad en leer esto, pida que alguien le ayude.

What are some kid-friendly meat and meat alternative ideas?

Soups and Salads

- Bean salad
- Bean soup
- Beef barley soup
- Chicken salad
- Chicken soup
- Chickpea salad
- Egg salad
- Goulash
- Lentil soup
- Mini meatballs added to soup
- Noodle soup with shrimp, beef, chicken or pork

Snacks

- Almond butter on crackers or pita
- Hummus
- Peanut butter and banana roll up
- Pumpkin seed squares
- Pumpkin seeds sprinkled in yogurt or cereal
- Soy nut butter and apple slices



Meals

- Apple and chicken curry
- Beef stroganoff
- Black bean burritos
- Cabbage rolls
- Chicken BBQ drumsticks
- Chicken fajitas/wraps
- Chicken fingers or nuggets, breaded
- Chicken fried rice
- Chicken satay with dipping sauce
- Chicken wings
- Chili with ground beef, turkey or chicken
- Eggs - poached, scrambled, fried, hard-cooked
- Egg frittata
- Empanada
- Falafel
- Canned salmon or tuna – made into burgers, salad, added to pasta
- Fish kebabs
- Fish sticks
- Fish, grilled
- Fish, poached
- Ground meat with sauce
- Kebabs (such as cubed chicken, pineapple and cherry tomato kebabs)
- Lasagna
- Mac & cheese with ground beef
- Meat tortellini, ravioli, cannelloni
- Meatballs
- Omelet (plain, with bacon and/or ham, with vegetables)
- Paella
- Perogies
- Pizza with meat toppings (ground meat, sausage, chicken)
- Pot Roast
- Quiche
- Sardines
- Sausages
- Sloppy Joes
- Spring rolls
- Tacos
- Tofu mixed in rice or added to soup
- Vegetarian chili



For more information, please contact:

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Paediatric Outpatient Clinic

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UnlockFood.ca

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