

# New Foods: Step by Step

It can be hard for some children to try new foods. Time and patience is needed. You can help your child learn to explore, eat, and enjoy more foods by using a method called food chaining.

## What is food chaining?

Food chaining is when you start with a food that your child likes and then make small changes to help them try it in a new way. This is a step-by-step process to help your child learn to eat new foods. The changes may be in the texture, temperature, taste, or look of the food. For example, cutting a food into a different shape, cooking instead of eating raw, mixing it with another food, or adding a sauce, all create 'new' foods.



## How do you start food chaining?

- Pick a food that your child already eats and accepts.
- Start with a small change that you think your child may be okay with.
- Offer these changed foods along with other foods your child likes and will eat.
- Once your child accepts the changed food, he or she has added this 'new' food to the list of foods they can accept and eat.
- You can then move on to make another change.



## Tips for success

- Offer only 1 new food from the chain at a time so you don't overwhelm your child.
- Let your child use their sense of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch to explore the food.
- Respect your child and let them set the pace as you move through each step. This process could be quick or it could take several months. Sometimes your child may skip steps and other times you may need to add more steps.
- It can take on average 6–15 times, or more, for a child to learn to like the food presented in a new way. Some children may take longer. Don't give up offering a food after a few tries if your child refuses it. Offer the food again at another time.
- If a new food in the chain is not successful, try making a smaller change.
- Using flavours can help to change or enhance the taste of the food. You can use different flavours to help move through the food chaining steps. Use foods such as cheese, gravy, plum sauce, ketchup, honey mustard, salad dressings, cinnamon, or seasoning mixes.
- If your child already accepts a food with a sauce, keep offering that sauce with each step of the chain.



## Food chaining examples

The following are examples to show you how to make changes to your child's favourite food in order to expand the foods they like and will eat.

### Example: French Fries to Cauliflower

**Step 1:** Fast food French fries.



**Step 2:** Frozen French fries, home baked.

**Step 3:** Homemade fries (made with fresh potatoes).



**Step 4:** Baked potato wedges.



**Step 5:** Roasted diced potato pieces.

**Step 6:** Soft boiled potato pieces.



**Step 7:** Fork mashed soft boiled potato.



**Step 8:** Mashed potato.

**Step 9:** Use ½ tsp (2 mL) pureed cauliflower with mashed potato.

**Step 10:** Add more cauliflower until there's only pureed cauliflower.



**Step 11:** Slowly change the texture of the cauliflower to mashed, then small pieces, then small flowerets. Do this until the cauliflower is served in its whole floweret form.



**Next Steps:**

### Example: Strawberry Yogurt Tube to Strawberries

**Step 1:** Strawberry yogurt tube.



**Step 2:** Strawberry yogurt tube squeezed into a cup or a bowl, eaten with a spoon.



**Step 3:** Strawberry yogurt poured from a tub into a bowl, eaten with a spoon.



**Step 4:** Add a small amount of pureed strawberries to strawberry yogurt in a bowl.

**Step 5:** Add small pieces of strawberry to the yogurt.



**Step 6:** Add larger pieces of strawberries to the yogurt.

**Step 7:** Use yogurt as a dip for sliced or whole strawberries.



**Next Steps:**

You can use this method with other flavours and fruits. For example:

**Step 1:** ½ tsp (2 mL) raspberry yogurt into ½ cup (125 mL) of strawberry yogurt.



**Step 2:** Increase the amount of raspberry yogurt, mixed with strawberry yogurt. Decrease the amount of strawberry yogurt each time, until your child is eating raspberry yogurt.

Repeat these steps with other flavours of yogurt.

**Next Steps:**

**Example: Chicken nuggets to chicken pieces**

**Step 1:** Fast food chicken nuggets.



**Step 2:** Store bought baked nuggets.



**Step 3:** Homemade chicken nuggets. Cut a chicken breast into pieces and use a chicken coating or breadcrumbs, such as panko. Lightly bread the chicken pieces and cook.



**Step 4:** Pan fried or baked chicken breast without coating.



**Next Steps:**

**Example: Chocolate to white milk**

**Step 1:** Chocolate milk with a small amount of white milk. Add 1 tsp (5 mL) white milk to 1 cup (250 mL) chocolate milk.



**Step 2:** Add 2 Tbsp (30 mL) white milk to 1 cup (250 mL) chocolate milk.



**Step 3:** Slowly add more white milk and use less chocolate milk in 1 cup (250 mL) milk until there's only 1 cup (250 mL) white milk.



**Next Steps:**

**Example: to try at home**

**Step 1:**

**Step 2:**

**Step 3:**

**Step 4:**

**Step 5:**

**Step 6:**

**Step 7:**

**Step 8:**

**Next Steps:**

**Example: to try at home**

**Step 1:**

**Step 2:**

**Step 3:**

**Step 4:**

**Step 5:**

**Step 6:**

**Step 7:**

**Step 8:**

**Next Steps:**

**Example: to try at home**

**Step 1:**

**Step 2:**

**Step 3:**

**Step 4:**

**Step 5:**

**Step 6:**

**Step 7:**

**Step 8:**

**Next Steps:**