

Abstract

For many reasons, toddlerhood is one of the key periods in relation to nutrition. Among the experts, general pediatricians have the best chance to influence the quality of nutrition in children of this age. It is questionable whether they pay enough attention to the topic of toddler nutrition during regular check-ups. They have the opportunity to use the NutriCHEQ program, which comprehensively solves the issue of nutrition in toddler age. It includes the NutriCHEQ questionnaire, which screens for deficiencies in the nutrition of toddlers, and a set of brochures that offer solutions to the revealed problems.

The goal of this work is to use the NutriCHEQ questionnaire to assess the quality of nutrition and eating habits of toddlers and then to analyze the dependence of the facts on selected factors on the part of the child and his family. Another goal is to compare the course of nutrition counseling for infants and for toddlers in the practice of pediatricians.

Research related to toddler nutrition was conducted in the form of a questionnaire survey, in which 96 children aged 12-35 months participated. Their parents filled out the NutriCHEQ questionnaire and the Supplemental questionnaire, which was focused on selected data about the child and his or her family. A total of 6 doctors completed the questionnaire for pediatricians regarding nutritional counseling.

According to the results of the NutriCHEQ questionnaire, 8 % of children in the monitored group were at risk of a severe lack of iron and other micronutrients in their diet, and 5 % of toddlers were at risk of receiving a significantly unbalanced diet. The intake of iron and other nutrients was significantly related to the rank of the child in the family ($p=0.0388$) and the administration of artificial milk formula ($p=0.0003$). It was more satisfactory in first-born and formula-fed babies. The balance of the diet showed a significant relationship with the age of the child ($p=0.0154$) and the education of the parents ($p=0.0339$). Older children and children of parents with lower education had a less balanced diet. Regarding eating habits and food-related phenomena, the most frequently present was drinking from a baby bottle, followed by the inappropriate example of eating in the family, the administration of various food supplements and watching television while eating. Children of parents with lower education had significantly more bad eating habits ($p=0.0161$). A survey of pediatricians found that nutritional counseling in toddlerhood is given less attention than in infancy. Only half of the doctors were aware of the NutriCHEQ program, but none of them used it in practice.

In view of the identified deficiencies in nutrition, it would be advisable to improve the quality of nutritional counseling for toddlers in general pediatricians' offices. Education should be carried out during check-ups at 12 and 18 months, and its content should prevent the most serious adverse events related to nutrition at this age. It would also be appropriate to use educational materials, for example NutriCHEQ brochures.

Key words: nutrition, toddler, NutriCHEQ.