

Feeding Your Baby



“Getting my son to eat new foods isn’t easy. I’ve discovered that if I serve small amounts of the new food over and over, he’ll eventually try it.”

—Kaiser Permanente member

Feeding time is a time for your baby to learn and practice. Be patient and pay attention to your baby’s needs and remember to always watch your baby closely when he or she is eating.

Here are some other tips to keep in mind:

- Breast milk is the best food for your baby and is all the nutrition your baby will need for the first six months of life.

- Do not give your baby honey in the first year of life. Honey can make your baby sick.
- Do not force your baby to eat or finish a bottle. Your baby is the best judge of how much to eat. Each baby is different and the amount your baby needs changes from day to day.

Starting solids

- When your baby can sit up well, shows interest in your food, and is around 6 months old, you can start introducing solid foods.
- You can safely introduce foods in any order. Single item purees or infant cereals are good first foods.

Safe feeding

- To avoid wasting food, place only a small amount of food at a time on your baby’s plate.
 - Feed your baby with a baby spoon or small spoon.
 - Do not feed your baby from the jar. Your baby’s saliva can spoil the food.
 - Throw away any leftover food from the bottle or dish.
 - Tightly seal all leftover baby food that comes from a jar. Store it in the refrigerator for no longer than two days.
- Avoid tooth decay: Never put sweetened drinks or soda in your baby’s bottle. Also, never put your baby to bed with a bottle. It can cause tooth decay, as well.
- Avoid putting pacifiers or baby utensils in your mouth. This can increase your baby’s risk for infections and cavities.

Allergies

- Some foods may cause allergies. Add one new food at a time. Wait two to three days before giving the next new

food. This gives your baby time to adjust to each new food and makes it easier to tell which food may have caused a reaction.

- Foods that may cause allergies include: cow’s milk, orange juice, eggs, wheat products, corn products, fish, seafood, soy products, peanuts, other nuts, citrus fruits, strawberries, and tomatoes.
- Signs that your baby may be allergic to a food:
 - diarrhea or vomiting
 - breathing problems
 - skin rash or hives
- Talk to your pediatrician if you have a strong family history of food allergies.
- Make or buy plain, one-item foods and avoid combination dinners. Making your own meat and vegetable combinations at home will save money and is healthier.

Healthy start

- Offer your baby plain mashed fruit for dessert. Babies do not need baby desserts, such as puddings, custards, and cobblers.
- Juice is not recommended at this age. If you give your baby juice, limit it to no more than 2 to 4 ounces of 100% whole juice, served in a cup, not a bottle.
- **Warning:** Babies easily choke. Avoid foods that may cause choking, such as:
 - whole hot dogs
 - nuts
 - chunks of meat
 - chunks of cheese
 - peanut butter
 - whole grapes
 - hard or sticky candy
 - popcorn
 - raw vegetables

Food for your baby's first year: This guide lists the foods that your baby is ready to eat at each age.

BIRTH TO 6 MONTHS

Breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula. (Breast milk is best for your baby.)

Do *not* give (until your baby is 1 year old):

- cow's milk
- soy milk
- goat's milk

Feed your baby on demand after the first two weeks. Watch for early signs of hunger: alertness, rooting, mouthing. (Don't wait until baby is crying.)

Always hold your baby when giving a bottle.

Give your baby a vitamin D supplement if you nurse exclusively.

A breast milk/formula feeding can be from 3 to 7 ounces.

Your baby does not need water or juice. Let your baby decide when to stop eating.

6 MONTHS

Continue breastfeeding and/or formula.

Offer your baby small spoonfuls of:

- mashed banana
- infant rice cereal (iron fortified)
- infant oatmeal (mix with breast milk or formula)

You can also offer other single item purees of fruits, vegetables, or meats.

Let your baby decide when and how much to eat. Do not force him or her to nurse or finish a bottle.

Feed your baby cereal from a spoon. Do not put cereal in your baby's bottle.

A meal of solid foods can be from 1 to 2 tablespoons.

6 TO 8 MONTHS

Continue breastfeeding and/or formula.

Offer your baby new foods:

- strained or pureed meats
- cottage cheese
- plain yogurt
- tofu

Encourage your baby to drink water from a cup.

Juice is not recommended at this age. If you do give your baby juice, limit it to no more than 2 to 4 ounces of 100% whole juice, served in a cup, not a bottle.

Offer your baby plain foods without added salt, sugar, or spice.

Let your baby start to feed him or herself.

A meal of solid foods can be from 4 to 7 tablespoons.

8 TO 10 MONTHS

Continue breastfeeding and/or formula.

Offer mixed-grain baby cereal, cooked plain rice, noodles, vegetables, fruits, and cheese.

Try finger foods like:

- shredded or grated cheese
- toast squares
- soft tortilla
- low-sugar cereal
- cooked vegetables
- soft fruit
- ground or very finely chopped cooked chicken, fish, or tofu
- cooked eggs

Feed your baby solid foods first at each meal before giving breast milk or formula.

Offer your baby new fruits and vegetables so your baby will enjoy a variety of foods.

A meal of solid foods can be from 5 to 8 tablespoons.

10 TO 12 MONTHS

Continue breastfeeding and/or formula.

Offer mashed or chopped foods from the family table such as:

- breads
- fruits
- cooked vegetables
- cooked soft meats and fish
- beans
- cooked eggs

Let your baby sit at the family table and use a spoon or hands to feed him or herself.

Slowly reduce the number of feedings from breast or bottle as your baby eats more food and drinks using a cup.

A meal of solid foods can be from 6 to 12 tablespoons.

1 YEAR

Continue breastfeeding.

Stop giving your baby formula. Replace with whole milk or full fat soy.

Juice is not recommended at this age. If you do give your baby juice, limit it to no more than 2 to 4 ounces of 100% whole juice, served in a cup, not a bottle.

Give your baby three to four small meals a day plus snacks.

Serve your baby drinks only in a cup. Offer 4 ounces of whole milk in a cup, four times a day.

A meal of solid foods can be from 8 to 16 tablespoons.

Other resources:

- kp.org
- www.aap.org
- www.lalecheleague.org

Suggested reading



Guide to Your Child's Nutrition—American Academy of Pediatrics



The Everything Baby's First Foods Book: Nutritious Meals and Snacks ...—Tarlov et al.

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other medical professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult your doctor.

Adapted from "The First Twelve Months: A guide to infant feeding." WIC Supplemental Nutrition Branch, California Department of Health Services.