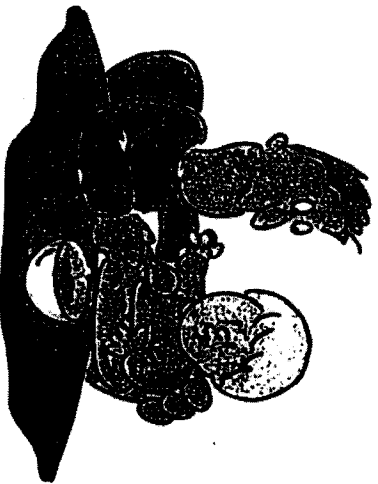


Feeding Your Baby in the First Year



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Feeding your baby in the first year of life is an exciting adventure for parents and babies alike. It's about development, nutrition, exploration, sharing and learning. You can help your baby develop a lifetime of healthy eating habits with the right start. This pamphlet will help show you when and how to introduce new foods and how to make feeding an enjoyable part of your baby's life.

The first 6 months

For the first 6 months of life, breastfed babies will get what they need from their mother's milk. Breast milk has the right amount and quality of nutrients to suit your baby's first food needs. It is easiest on her digestive system, so there's less chance of constipation or diarrhea. Breast milk also contains antibodies and other immune factors that help your baby prevent and fight off illness better.

Babies who are exclusively breastfed should get a daily supplement of vitamin D, which is available as drops.

If breastfeeding is not an option, use a store-bought iron-fortified infant formula for the first 9 to 12 months. The formula should be cow's milk-based.

Introducing solid foods

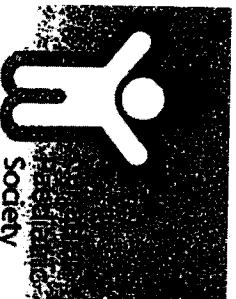
At 6 months, most babies cannot get everything they need from breast milk or formula alone. Though you can continue to breastfeed until your baby is 2 years and beyond, at 6 months you'll start to introduce your baby to other foods. Your baby is ready to start other foods when he:

- Seems hungry earlier than usual.
- Can sit up without support, and has good control of his neck muscles.
- Holds food in his mouth without pushing it out on his tongue right away.
- Shows interest in food when others are eating, and opens his mouth when he sees food coming his way.
- Can let you know he doesn't want food by leaning back or turning his head away.

There are many ways to introduce solid food. The first foods usually vary from culture to culture and from family to family.

Start with foods that contain iron, which babies need for many different aspects of their development. It's common to start with a single grain, iron-fortified infant cereal such as rice or barley. Meat, poultry, cooked egg yolk and well cooked legumes (beans, lentils, chick peas) are also good sources of iron.

- Introduce new foods one at a time, waiting about 3 to 5 days before trying another. That way, if your baby develops a reaction, you'll have a better idea of what food might have caused it.



Healthy foods that your family eats are good to start with as long as they are plain, with no added salt, sugar or spices. You can also use commercial baby foods, as long as you check the label to ensure there is no added salt or sugar.

- **Grain products.** At 6 to 9 months, offer your baby up to 30 to 60 mL (2 to 4 tbsp.) of iron-fortified infant cereal, twice a day. Then try other grain products such as small pieces of dry toast or unsalted crackers. At 9 to 12 months, offer other plain cereals, whole grain bread, rice and pasta.
- **Vegetables.** At 6 to 9 months, offer your baby pureed cooked vegetables—yellow, green or orange. At 9 to 12 months, progress to soft, mashed cooked vegetables.
- **Fruits.** At 6 to 9 months, offer pureed cooked fruits, very ripe mashed fruits (such as bananas). At 9 to 12 months, try soft fresh fruits, peeled, seeded and diced or canned fruit, packed in water or juice (not syrup).
- **Meat and alternatives.** At 6 to 9 months, offer pureed cooked meat, fish, chicken, tofu, mashed beans, egg yolk. At 9 to 12 months, mince or dice these foods.
- **Milk and milk products.** At 9 months, you can offer dairy foods like yogurt (3.25% or higher), cottage cheese or grated hard cheese. Wait until your baby is 9 to 12 months old before introducing whole cow's milk (3.25%). After 12 months of age, your baby should not take more than 720 mL (24 oz.) of milk products per day. Too much milk can lead to iron deficiency anemia.

How much to feed your baby

Follow your baby's cues for how much to feed. Start by offering a teaspoon or two, and don't rush. Some babies need to try a food many times before accepting it. If she's not hungry, she'll turn her head and close her mouth. If she's hungry, she'll get excited and open up. Never trick or coax her to eat more by playing games or offering sweetened foods. Babies who are allowed to follow their own hunger cues are much less likely to overeat later in life.

Trying foods with different textures helps babies learn how to handle foods in their mouth. So it's important to vary both tastes and textures when serving foods.

Your baby's development	How often to feed	Type of food
Sits with support	2-3 times a day*	Pureed, mashed food and semisolid foods
Sits on own	2-3 times a day*	Family foods, small amounts of soft mashed foods without lumps
Crawls	3-4 times a day*	Family foods, ground or soft mashed foods with tiny soft lumps; crunchy foods that dissolve, such as whole grain crackers
Walks	3 meals and 2 snacks a day*	Coarsely chopped foods; foods with more texture; toddler foods; bite-sized pieces of food; finger foods

*Plus breast milk, formula, or whole cow's milk, depending on your child's age

Water and juice

Babies who are exclusively breastfed don't need extra water. When your baby begins to eat other foods, you can start to offer water occasionally.

Babies and children don't need to drink juice. Too much juice, especially apple juice, can cause diarrhea. It can fill up small stomachs and decrease your baby's appetite for nutritious foods. Too much juice can also cause early childhood tooth decay.

When you do offer juice, be sure it is only 100% fruit juice. Always offer it in a cup, as part of a meal or snack. Offer water to babies and young children between meals and snacks if they are thirsty. Limit juice to 120 to 180 mL (4 to 6 oz.) per day.

Foods not recommended

- Don't give babies sugary drinks or foods, such as candies, soda/pop or energy drinks.
- Don't give honey to babies under 1 year old, as there is a risk of infant botulism (food poisoning).
- To reduce the chance of an allergic reaction, avoid giving egg whites until your baby is 1 year old.
- If you have a family history of allergies, you may want to wait until your baby is 3 years old before introducing peanuts, tree nuts (such as pecans or walnuts) or shellfish.

How to prevent choking

- Always supervise babies and children while they are eating. They should be sitting down.
- Don't feed your baby peanuts, nuts or popcorn.
- Dice or slice round foods such as wieners or grapes.
- Grate raw vegetables such as carrots to make them easier to chew.
- Remove pits from fruits.
- Cook hard fruits and vegetables to soften them.
- Spread sticky foods like peanut butter thinly on a cracker or toast rather than bread.
- Chop or scrape stringy meat and add broth to moisten it.



Developmental milestones related to feeding

Age	Physical milestones	Social milestones
Birth to 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opens mouth wide when nipple touches lips • sucks and swallows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizes source of milk by about 10 weeks
4 to 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sucking strength increases • brings fingers to mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • socializes during feeding
6 to 9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drinks from a cup held by an adult • eats soft food from a spoon • begins rotary chewing (in a circular motion) • enjoys holding food and finger-feeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loves to be included at the table for meals • begins to show likes and dislikes for certain foods
9 to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tries to use a spoon • starts to finger feed with a more advanced grasp • feeds at regular times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is aware of what others do • imitates others
12 to 18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grasps and releases food with fingers • holds spoon but use is awkward • turns spoon in mouth • uses a cup but may dribble 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wants food that others are eating • loves performing • understands simple questions and requests
18 to 24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appetite decreases • likes eating with hands • likes trying different textures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easily distracted • prefers certain foods • ritual becomes important

For more information

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating:
www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Dietitians of Canada:
www.dietitians.ca

For more information on your child's health, growth and development, visit *Caring for Kids*, a website developed by the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS):
www.caringforkids.cps.ca



The CPS is a national advocacy association that promotes the health needs of children and youth.



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