


Feeding Your Baby for the First 12 Months

Why should I follow guidelines for feeding my baby?

Feeding your baby is one of the most important tasks you face. In the first year of life your baby grows and develops quickly. Good nutrition is very important during this time. Knowing how and when to start your baby on solid foods may be confusing. This information will help you meet your baby's nutritional needs.

Age of child	Watch for these skills	Foods to offer
Birth to 4 months:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use breast milk or iron-fortified formula. Do this until your baby is 1 year old.
4 months to 6 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses hands to help hold the bottle steady. Holds head steady. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue breast milk or formula. Add single grain infant cereal. Also add strained foods such as fruits, vegetables and meats to your baby's diet. It does not matter what order you start these foods. Do not give cereal with a bottle unless directed by health care provider.
6 months to 8 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts to sit without support. Starts to hold a spoon while caregiver feeds. Opens mouth for spoon. Tries to bite food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue breast milk/formula and cereal. Add new strained foods and multigrain cereals to your baby's diet. Offer solids 1 to 3 times per day. Start to offer breast milk or formula as sips from sipper cup with meals.
8 months to 10 months: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can bite into foods. Starts to use fingers for feeding. Eats with up-and-down munching movement. Takes sips from open cup. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue breast milk/formula, cereals, strained fruits, vegetables, and meats. Limit fruit juice to 0 to 4 oz per day. Add mashed foods, such as cooked beans. Offer a variety of solids 3 times per day. <p>Add finger foods to your baby's diet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toast, crackers. Cooked noodles, cooked rice. Soft fruit slices (bananas, pears). Cheese. Solid foods that dissolve easy. Try puffs, dry cereal or cookies that crumble easily.
10 months to 12 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can hold spoon and mouth it but cannot use it for feeding. Helps hold cup. Starts to eat on their own using their fingers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue foods listed above for 8 to 10 months old. Add finely diced table foods. Add plain yogurt, cottage cheese and cooked scrambled eggs. Add pasteurized whole milk once your child reaches 1 year old. Offer solids at 3 meals per day.

Feeding Guidelines (continued)

Do not give your child foods from the list below. Babies can choke on small pieces, thick, sticky food such as:

- Grapes
- Nuts
- Candy
- Gum
- Raw vegetables
- Pretzels
- Hot dogs
- Popcorn
- Raisins
- Chips
- Peanut butter
- Fruit Leather

Do not use sugar, honey, salt and pepper on your baby's food. Uncooked honey and corn syrup (i.e. Karo Syrup®) may be a cause of infant food poisoning, called botulism. Do not give these to a child younger than one year.

Supplements

- All breastfed infants should be given 600 IU (International Units) of Vitamin D each day starting the first few days of life. This will prevent rickets. Vitamin D should be given until breastfeeding stops. Iron supplements for breastfed infants should be started at 4 months of age. Ask your baby's doctor how much you should give.
- Iron-fortified infant formula along with new age-appropriate solids gives enough iron and zinc until your child is one year old.
 - Iron fortified formula does not have enough vitamin D for babies. If your baby is drinking less than 25 ounces of standard infant formula per day, add 400 IU infant vitamin D drops. If your baby is drinking 25 ounces or more per day, give 200 IU infant vitamin D drops.
- It is important to give breast milk and/or formula for at least the first year. Do not use whole milk until after your child is one year old.



Tips for feeding

- Do not prop your baby's bottle. When bottle feeding, cradle your baby in a semi-upright position and support their head.
- Try one "single-ingredient" new food at a time. Wait 2 to 3 days before starting another. This gives you time to watch for any allergic reactions.
- Formula or breast-fed infants do not need extra water for hydration even in hot, dry climates. If your baby is sick, talk with their doctor before giving your baby other fluids.
- Do not give your infant Kool-Aid®, fruit punch, soda, sugar water, tea or coffee.
- Citrus juices such as orange, grapefruit and vegetable juices may irritate your child's system. Watch your child for tolerance.
- Do not give your infant fried foods, high fat gravies, sauces or processed meats such as bologna or hot dogs.
- Keep your baby in a highchair when feeding solids. Allow only 3 meals and 2-3 small snacks each day at set times.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.