

Feeding your Baby through the first year of life

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Cardinal Pediatrics
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NEWBORNS

- Breastmilk is best for babies, however, if you cannot or choose not to breastfeed, use an iron fortified infant formula. Both will provide all the calories, nutrients and fluids that your baby needs
- Do NOT give your infant baby cereal or add cereal to their bottle - they are not ready to digest solid foods
- Do not give your baby plain water

4 to 6 MONTHS

- Breastmilk (or formula) is still the most important source of nutrition for your baby.
- The AAP recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, but most pediatricians agree that babies may start solids between 4 and 6 months if they are ready.
- Your baby may be ready if they seem interested in foods, hold their head up well on their own, do not push the spoon out with their tongue, and can sit up well with support.

WHAT TO FEED YOUR BABY:

- Start with iron rich foods, such as iron fortified baby cereal or pureed meats. For breastfed babies in particular, the AAP recommends that meats should be one of their first foods.
- Baby cereal is a great place to start. Oatmeal contains more fiber than rice which makes it less constipating. Start by mixing it very thin (1 tablespoon of cereal to 4-5 tablespoons of breastmilk or formula). You will be able to start mixing it thicker once your baby gets used to eating.
- You may also start introducing single ingredient, thinly pureed fruits and vegetables (homemade or stage 1 jar foods). There is no evidence that starting vegetable before fruits will affect your baby's taste.
- Wait 3-5 days between introducing new ingredients and watch for food reactions, which include rashes, vomiting, diarrhea. If your baby has a reaction, stop feeding that food and contact us.

HOW TO FEED YOUR BABY:

- Start feeding your baby AFTER breastfeeding or after a bottle. Your baby will be more patient and more likely to enjoy this new experience if they are not starving!
- You can start using your high chair if it has a five-point harness and reclines. Many high chairs cannot safely be used until your baby can sit up on their own. You can also use an infant seat such as the Bumbo seat, or something similar.
- Use a small spoon with a long handle and start with small serving sizes, 1-2 spoonfuls at a time.
- Do not be discouraged if you baby does not like it at first. It may take several tries.

DON'Ts: Do not put cereal in the bottle (instead, feed your baby cereal in a bowl with a spoon). Do not feed your baby when you are in a hurry, or when your baby is already tired and fussy. Do not keep feeding your baby once they are showing signs of fullness (turning head away, keeping mouth closed)

Always supervise your baby while eating



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6 to 9 MONTHS

- Breastmilk (or formula) is still the most important source of nutrition for your baby.
- If you did not yet start solid foods, you should start now. See 4 to 6 month for tips for first starting foods.
- Once your baby is doing well eating baby cereal and thin purees, you can start to gradually increase the thickness of the purees (stage 2). You can start to mix ingredients once your baby has had every individual ingredient in the mix.
- Introduce a variety of fruits and vegetables. By now, you should also introduce pureed meats, especially if your baby did not take to baby cereal.
- You can start giving your baby whole milk yogurt (vitamin D fortified is great). Do not give cow's milk until after 12 months (your baby is not ready to digest it yet).
- Introduce a sippy cup. You can offer 1-2 oz of water in a sippy cup with meals now. You may also try offering breastmilk or formula in a sippy cup. "transition" sippy cups which have a soft silicone spout are a good place to start, such as Nuk cups. First Years Take and Toss cups are also easy for infants to use. Some leakproof cups (especially if they contain valves) are hard to use at first.

HOMEMADE BABY FOODS

Making your own baby foods is actually easier than it sounds! Steam the veggies or fruits first, then use a blender or food processor, adding water to achieve the desired consistency. You can also mash food with a fork once your baby has mastered thicker textures. No salt. No sweeteners.

For babies under 6 months, do not cook foods high in nitrates (spinach, beets, turnips, collard greens, green beans, squash, carrots). These are safe in store bought foods because the manufacturers test for nitrates.

Refrigerate left over foods for up to 24 hours.

Helpful tip: you can freeze homemade baby foods in an ice cube tray, then store the cubes in a labeled ziplock bag for future use.

A WORD ON FOOD ALLERGIES

- Most common allergens: milk, soy, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, fish, shellfish
- Experts now recommend introducing allergenic foods earlier as research has shown that this actually reduces the risk of food allergies
- Start peanut products as soon as your baby starts to eat. An easy way is to mix a small amount of peanut butter into baby cereal or baby food. Give at least 3x a week once you start. Call your doctor right away if your baby has a reaction. You can also give your baby peanut puffs once they are ready for finger foods (Bambas, or Earth's Best baby peanut puffs)
- Call your doctor if your baby develops a rash, hives, vomiting or diarrhea after eating a new food.



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9 to 12 MONTHS

- By 9 months, most babies have developed a "pincer grasp" and can pick up small pieces of food between their thumb and index finger. It is now time to introduce "finger" or table food, as long they can also sit up straight unassisted and bring food to their mouth.
- Your baby can eat the same foods you are eating, as long as they are soft and cut small. Avoid salt in your cooking if you will be sharing with your baby.
- Well cooked vegetables, soft meats and fishes, meatballs or ground meat, small noodles or cut noodles, small pieces of toasts, and scrambled eggs are examples of good finger foods
- Continue to offer a variety of foods, as it can take trying a new food up to 14 times before a baby starts eating it.
- As your baby approaches their first birthday, encourage self-feeding as much as possible.

Choking Hazards

- Uncooked vegetables and fruits (except banana and avocado)
- Whole grapes
- Nuts
- Popcorn
- Hot dogs

Always err on the side of cutting food in skinny pieces.

Pieces should be <1/4 inch and only put a few pieces at a time on the plate.

Beyond 12 months

- The AAP recommends breastfeeding until 12 months if possible, and beyond if you and your baby choose to.
- Do not introduce cow's milk until after 12 months. At 12 months, you can introduce cow's milk and your baby no longer needs formula.
- Do not give any honey until after 12 months.
- Do not give juice until after 12 months, unless recommended by your doctor for treatment of constipation. Even beyond 12 months, juice is not healthy and should be saved as a treat. If you do introduce it, limit to 4 oz per day at most and water it down

Always supervise your baby while eating

Call your doctor if your baby develops a rash, hives, vomiting or diarrhea after eating a new food.

Remember to enjoy all those funny little faces – soon they will be cooking you meals!



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