



# Feeding Your Baby

△ 6 TO 12 MONTHS

## How to know if your baby is allergic to a new food

Sometimes a baby will react to a new food. It may be just a temporary reaction. However, in a very small number of cases, it could be an allergic reaction. If food allergies are common in your family, your baby may be at higher risk to develop one.

### Signs your baby may have a food reaction:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Skin rashes, such as eczema
- Coughing
- Wheezing or other breathing problems

**IF YOU SEE A REACTION AFTER YOUR BABY EATS A NEW FOOD,** stop feeding that food and call your doctor or nurse. If you don't see a reaction after 5 days, keep feeding your baby that food and start another new food.

**DON'T FEED YOUR BABY HONEY OR FOODS MADE WITH HONEY.** Honey may have spores that cause botulism. Botulism is a rare but serious illness caused by a toxin that attacks the body's nerves. Botulism can make your baby very sick.

## Make family memories together

Cook together. Eat together. Talk together. Make mealtime a family time.

- Talk about fun and happy things and include your baby. Move your baby's highchair close to the table. Babies like to be at the table with you and their family.
- Focus on the meal and each other. Turn off the TV. Take phone calls later. Put away cellphones and tablets.

**For help finding nutrition resources, an Apple Health dentist, or to find out if you are eligible for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits contact:**



Call the WithinReach Help Me Grow Washington Hotline at **1-800-322-2588** (711 TTY relay) or [www.ParentHelp123.org](http://www.ParentHelp123.org)



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## Feeding time is a special time \* \* \*

Introduce new foods, one at a time, and wait for 3 to 5 days before introducing another food. This way, your baby can adjust to new experience. Doing so allows you to watch for possible reactions to a new food. If your baby doesn't want to eat a new food, offer it again later.

Your baby may need to try a new food several times before being OK with certain foods.

### Tips to get started:

- Wash your hands and your baby's hands before you make food or feed your baby.
- Sit your baby in a highchair and use the safety belt to secure them.
- Sit your baby facing you so they don't have to turn to eat from a spoon.
- Start small and offer 1 to 2 teaspoons of mashed or pureed food once a day.
- Encourage your baby to use a spoon and their fingers to eat.
- Have your baby practice drinking from an open cup.
- Feeding is messy! Don't stress and keep it casual.
- Throw out any leftover food your baby didn't eat.

## Learning to eat foods is new for your baby \* \* \*

Your baby will want your attention while they learn this new skill. Help your baby do their best when eating. Here are some tips:

- Offer food when your baby is calm, wide awake, and not too hungry.
- Talk quietly and kindly.
- Share time together without phones or tablets.
- Follow your baby's lead! Watch for cues that your baby is still hungry or is full. Your baby will turn their head away or close their mouth when full. Your baby will fuss if you take food away too soon.

## Is your baby ready for solid food? Δ Δ Δ

Learning to eat solid food is an exciting time for you and your baby. Wait to start solids until your baby is ready. For most babies that is around 6 months or as told by their doctor.

### Your baby may be ready when they can:

- Grasp and hold onto things.
- Sit up well with support.
- Hold their head steady.
- Open and close their mouth over a spoon.
- Swallow food.
- Move food around using their tongue.
- Use a cup with help.



## Your baby's eating habits will change.

When your baby becomes more interested in solid food they may drink less human milk or formula. Human milk or formula is still important and should provide most of your baby's nutrients until their first birthday.

Slowly add solid foods while continuing to feed your milk or formula. Add thicker and lumpier foods when your baby is ready.

## Foods that may cause choking Δ Δ Δ

You should avoid serving your child foods that are choking hazards. These include:

- Firm, round foods, such as whole berries and whole grapes.
- Hard, crunchy foods like tortilla or corn chips, popcorn, nuts.
- Raw, hard-textured vegetables like carrots.
- Peanut butter offered alone, which can be too sticky for babies to safely eat.



## Your baby needs human milk or formula ▲▲▲

Between 6 and 12 months of age, most of the nutrition your baby needs still comes from human milk or formula. It is common for babies to change feeding patterns from day to day as they grow. Feed your baby based on their hunger cues.

Expect to feed your baby human milk or formula about 6 to 8 times a day. Your baby's tummy can now hold about 6 to 8 ounces at a time. Let your baby drink until they act full. Offering human milk beyond a year has many benefits, so keep offering your milk for as long as you and your baby wants it.

Your baby doesn't need sugary drinks.

Do not offer sugary drinks, like soda, fruit punch, sports drinks, or any type of juice (including 100 percent juice) to babies under 1 year of age. They may make babies less hungry for the healthy foods that help them grow. Sugary drinks may also harm your baby's teeth.

## Tips for feeding your baby:

### ▲ 6 to 7 months

Mix your baby's first solid foods with a little bit of human milk or formula. Make the mixture thicker as your baby learns to eat from a soft safety spoon.

#### Good first foods to feed your baby:

These foods help babies get iron they need around 6 months.

- Iron-fortified, single grain infant cereal.
- Strained or pureed meats.

#### Once your baby starts to eat cereal and meats, introduce:

- Strained or mashed vegetables.
- Strained or mashed fruit.

Offer your baby cereal in a bowl with a spoon. Do not add cereal or other solid foods to the bottle. Do not add sugar or salt to your baby's food. Feed from a spoon to help your baby learn how to eat. Learning to eat from a spoon will also help your baby learn how to talk.

### ○ 7 to 8 months

Good foods to feed your baby:

Strained or pureed:

- Cooked beans, such as pinto or navy beans.
- Cooked vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, carrots, and green beans.
- Soft fruit, such as peaches, bananas, and pears.

Other good options:

- Baby cereal mixed with human milk or iron-fortified formula.
- Cooked egg yolk mashed with human milk, iron-fortified formula, or applesauce.
- Cottage cheese.
- Plain, whole-milk yogurt.
- Mashed tofu.
- Ground cooked meat, chicken, or turkey.
- Cooked fish without bones.

## Menu ideas for your baby: 8 to 12 months

Here are some helpful ideas to feed your baby. Every child is unique, and your baby may eat less or more than these sample menus.

### Human milk or formula \* \* \*

Keep feeding your baby your milk or formula as needed. For babies fed with human milk this is usually 6 or more times a day. For babies fed with formula this is about 24 to 32 ounces a day. Your baby may want to feed less milk as you start offering other foods.

#### ◇ 8 to 10 months

#### Sample Food Menu

Babies may be ready for food with more texture when they can:

- Take a bite of food.
- Pick up finger foods and feed themselves.

\*Tbsp. = Tablespoon

#### Breakfast

- 2 to 4 Tbsp.\* baby cereal (such as oatmeal) mixed with human milk or formula
- 2 to 4 Tbsp. mashed fruit (such as applesauce)

#### Lunch

- 1 to 2 Tbsp. cooked egg mashed with 2 to 4 Tbsp. cooked potato and chicken broth
- ½ soft tortilla cut into small pieces

#### Dinner

- 1 to 2 Tbsp. small pea-size pieces of cooked protein (such as ground beef or chicken)
- 2 Tbsp. grains (such as cooked pasta or rice)
- 2 to 4 Tbsp. mashed vegetables (such as cooked peas or broccoli)

#### \* 10 to 12 months

#### Sample Food Menu

Babies may be ready for more textured food once they:

- Chew and swallow soft, mashed, and chopped food.
- Start to use a spoon and finger-feed themselves.

\*Tbsp. = Tablespoon

#### Breakfast

- 2 to 4 Tbsp.\* baby cereal (such as rice cereal) mixed with human milk or formula
- 3 to 4 Tbsp. chopped soft fruit (such as peeled peaches)

#### Lunch

- 2 to 4 Tbsp. cooked protein (such as turkey or beans)
- 2 Tbsp. cooked rice mixed with 2 Tbsp. mashed or chopped soft vegetables (such as cooked sweet potato)
- 3 to 4 Tbsp. small pieces of soft-cooked carrots

#### Dinner

- 2 to 3 Tbsp. pinto beans cooked until very soft
- ½ soft tortilla with melted cheese cut into small pieces
- 3 to 4 Tbsp. small pieces of soft-cooked vegetables (such as zucchini)

#### Morning snack

- 2 to 4 Tbsp. mashed or chopped vegetables (such as cooked squash)
- ½ slice toasted bread cut into small squares spread thinly with a teaspoon of peanut butter mixed with applesauce

#### Afternoon snack

- 2 to 4 Tbsp. dry cereal
- 3 to 4 Tbsp. small, bite-size pieces of fruit (such as peeled pears)

#### Evening snack

- 2 to 4 Tbsp. mashed or chopped soft fruit (such as strawberries) or vegetables (such as cooked carrots)

## Take care of your baby's mouth \* \* \*

- After each feeding and before bedtime, if your baby is awake, clean their teeth and gums with a clean wet cloth or small soft toothbrush.
- If your baby is asleep, don't wake them. Just clean your baby's teeth and gums when they wake up. If you breast or chest feed, take your baby off your chest as soon as they fall asleep.
- Don't pre-chew food, put a pacifier in your mouth before giving it to your baby, or share cups and eating utensils. Germs that cause tooth decay can pass to your baby through your saliva.

## Protect your baby's little teeth.

Even though you may not see them yet, your baby's teeth are beginning to form and grow. Plan your baby's first dental visit within 6 months after your baby's first tooth appears or no later than 1 year of age. Ask your doctor about your child's oral health during well-child checkups.

## Teach your baby to use a cup ▲▲▲

Teach your baby to drink water from a small cup when they're around 6 to 7 months old. Give your baby a small amount of human milk, formula, or water in a cup to drink with food.

