

Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital Caring for your Child's Nutrition

YOUR BABY'S NUTRITION

Birth to 1 Year of Age

Choosing how to feed your baby is an important decision that will have long lasting effects on you and your baby. Besides providing nutrition, feeding your baby gives you a chance to hold and cuddle your infant, which is very important for your baby as well as you.

The following feeding guidelines will be divided by months: Birth to 4 months, 4-6 months, 6-8 months, and 8-12 months.

BIRTH TO 4 MONTHS

Breast milk or formula is all the nutrition that your baby needs. Breast milk is best for your baby and is beneficial even if you only breastfeed for a short amount of time, or part-time. The immune factors that are found in breast milk can help prevent infections. If you do not breast feed, use an iron-fortified infant formula.

Helpful Tips

- Babies should not have cereals or other solid foods until 4-6 months of age since
 it can cause babies to take less milk or formula, which have more nutrients than
 solid food.
- Your baby may take 4-5 ounces at each feeding starting the second month and by the end of the third month, may need to add an additional ounce at each feeding.
- If your baby cannot or will not eat from a spoon, he or she is not ready for solid foods.
- Never put babies to bed with a bottle of formula, milk or juice. This can start a
 habit that can cause tooth decay.
- Heating formula in the microwave is not a good idea because of blind spots that could be too hot and harm your baby.
- Six wet diapers a day is a good sign that feeding is going well.

- Spitting up in small amounts (less than 1 ounce) is normal as long as it happens within an hour of feeding and doesn't bother the baby. You can reduce spitting up in the early months by:
 - Feeding before the baby gets very hungry.
 - o Keeping the baby in a semi-upright position during the feeding.
 - Burping the baby regularly.
 - Avoiding overfeeding.
 - Not playing vigorously with the baby after a feeding.
- Signs that your baby has eaten enough:
 - Smiles and unlatches from nipple.
 - o Falls asleep.
 - o Puckers his or her lips.
 - Pulls away from the nipple.
 - Bites the nipple.
 - Closes lips tightly when you try to put the nipple back in.

4 TO 6 MONTHS

Your baby is ready for solid foods when:

- He or she has good head control.
- He or she can sit up without support.
- He or she does not thrust his or her tongue out when fed.
- He or she seems hungry between regular feedings.

Adding Baby Cereal

- Buy iron fortified baby cereals from a box, they have more iron than adult cereals and jarred baby cereals.
- Start with rice cereal since it causes the fewest allergy problems.
- Use only single-ingredient baby cereals.
- Start by mixing 1 tablespoon of cereal with 4 tablespoons of breast milk or formula.
- As your baby learns to move the solid food to the back of the mouth, increase the thickness of the cereal.

DO NOT:

- Add honey to the cereal. This can be used once the baby is one year old.
- Add cereal to the bottle. He or she needs to learn how to eat food, not to drink food.
- Add salt or sugar to the baby's food

6 TO 8 MONTHS

Now it is time to start introducing other foods to your baby's diet. Begin offering one food at a time. This means using a food three days before giving a new food. This is to make sure your baby is not allergic to each food.

Helpful Tips

- Start offering single vegetables. Suggested vegetables to begin with are squash, sweet potato, green beans, or carrots.
- After 2-3 weeks of adding vegetables, start adding single fruits. Start with pears, applesauce, bananas, or peaches.
- Try giving fruit juice in a covered cup with a spout and 2 handles. Only give 100% fruit juice, not juice drinks or drink mixes. Do not give orange or grapefruit juice until one year of age.
- Limit juice to 3-4 ounces a day. Too much juice will replace nutrition from other foods and can cause diarrhea.
- Try giving strained baby meats, after you have added the vegetables and fruits.
- Try feeding mashed fruits and vegetables once he or she has tried all of the strained ones.
- Once the baby has teeth, try adding soft, finely chopped fruits and cooked vegetables.
- After successfully trying the individual foods, you can start offering mixed foods.
- Feed your baby from a dish instead of directly from the jar of baby food. Bacteria from the baby's mouth can contaminate the remaining food.
- Use a high chair when feeding your baby.

8 TO 12 MONTHS

Now is a good time to start feeding your baby "finger foods". Finger foods are small, bite size pieces of food that will help the baby learn how to feed himself. Let him or her touch, smell, and taste all kinds of foods.

Helpful Tips

- Offer baby 2-3 tablespoons of meat 2 times a day. The baby needs the extra iron and protein because he is drinking less breast milk or formula. You can make your own using a blender or baby food grinder. Infant mixed dinners will have less iron and protein than single meats.
- Feed ground or finely chopped meats as he gets more teeth.
- Other sources of protein will be cheese, yogurt and cottage cheese.

- Add table foods. You can fork-mash, cut up, or grind whatever foods the rest of the family is eating. Offer soft bland foods at first. Good choices are mashed potatoes, noodles, rice, and soft vegetables.
- By around 9 months of age, your baby should be able take food between the forefinger and thumb so he can start trying to feed himself.
- After 12 months of age, you can serve whole milk in a cup, which will help transition from the bottle.

Foods **NOT** to Give During the First Year of Life

- Citrus foods (oranges, grapefruits, tomatoes)
- Egg whites
- Fish
- Honey
- Peanut Butter
- Foods that can be easily choked on such as grapes, hot dogs, nuts, popcorn, gum, ice cubes, olives, raw carrots, hard candies, and marshmallows.

Sample Meal Plan for Your Baby's First Year of Life

Every baby is different. Do not worry if your baby does not follow these guidelines exactly. The suggested serving sizes are only guidelines to help you get started. If you are concerned about your baby's intake and/or growth, check with your doctor.

AGE	FOOD GROUP	FOODS	DAILY SERVINGS	SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES
0-4	Milk	Breast milk or	On demand	
months		Formula	(about 8-12)	
4-6 months	Milk	Breast milk or Formula	4-6	6-8 ounces
	Grain	Baby cereal	2 (1 at first)	1-2 Tablespoons

AGE	FOOD GROUP	FOODS	DAILY SERVINGS	SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES
6-8	Milk	Breast milk or	3-5	
months		Formula	3-5	6-8 ounces
	Grain	Baby cereal	2	2-3 Tablespoons
		Bread	Offer	¼ slice
		Crackers		1-2 crackers
	Fruit	Fruit	2	2-3 Tablespoons
		Fruit juice	1	3 ounces
	Vegetables	Vegetables	2	2-3 Tablespoons
	Meat	Chicken, beef, pork	1	1-2 Tablespoons
8-12	Milk	Breast milk or	3-4	
months		Formula	3-4	6-8 oz
		Cheese	Offer	½ oz
		Plain yogurt or	Offer	½ cup
		baby yogurt		
		Cottage cheese	Offer	
				¼ cup
	Grain	Baby cereal	2	2-4 Tablespoons
		Bread or	1-2	¼ slice
		Crackers		2 crackers
	Fruit	Fruit	2	3-4 Tablespoons
		Fruit juice	1	Up to 4 oz
	Vegetable	Vegetables	2	3-4 Tablespoons
	Meat	Chicken, beef, pork. Cooked dried beans or Egg yolks (no egg whites)	2	2-3 Tablespoons

Additional Information:		
If you have questions, call:		, Registered Dietitian
Phone: (717) 531-	or (717) 531-8406	