Feeding Your Baby

“Getting my baby to try new foods isn’t easy. I’ve found that if I serve small amounts of the new food over and over, he’ll eventually try it.”
—Kaiser Permanente mom

Let your baby lead
Whether your baby drinks breast milk, formula, or both, it’s important to watch for cues that they’re hungry and full.
• Look for signs. Babies let you know when they want more and when they’re done by closing their mouth and turning away.
• Don’t try to force your baby to finish a bottle or empty both breasts. The amount they eat can change from day to day.

When to start solids
It’s important to only feed breast milk or formula until your baby is at least 4 months old. Offering anything else too soon can be dangerous.

Is my baby ready?
Most babies are ready for solid food when they:
• Are 4 to 7 months old.
• Can sit up well and have good head/neck control.
• Are interested: watch you eat, reach for food, open their mouth.

Foods to offer
When your baby’s ready, you can safely introduce these foods in any order.
• Pureed vegetables and fruits. (Even if your baby doesn’t like a food at first, keep offering.) While sweet fruits and vegetables like bananas and sweet potatoes are fine, you can also give broccoli or carrots.
• Finely ground meat or beans (these are good sources of iron).
• Infant oatmeal, or another whole-grain infant cereal, mixed with breast milk or formula.
• Whole-milk yogurt; cottage cheese.
• Shredded cheese.

Baby is sweet enough
Teach your baby to like unsweetened foods.
• Don’t give juice or other sweet drinks.
• Avoid foods with added sugars.
• Offer plain mashed fruit. Babies don’t need baby desserts.

About food allergies
We used to recommend waiting to introduce some foods until babies were older. New research shows we can help prevent some food allergies by giving a variety of foods in small amounts sooner—around ages 4 to 6 months.

How to introduce foods safely:
• Give new foods one at a time at home, just in case your baby has a reaction.
• Start with a very small amount. If there’s no reaction after 10 minutes, continue to give the food regularly (2 to 3 times per week).
• Wait 2 to 3 days before giving the next new food. This gives your baby time to adjust. If your baby does have a reaction, it’s easier to know which food may have caused it.

Special note about peanut products
If your baby has a serious eczema or egg allergy, talk with your child’s doctor before introducing peanut products.

Signs that your baby may be allergic to a food include:
• Diarrhea or vomiting
• Breathing problems
• Skin rash or hives

Do not give these foods and drinks:
• Juice or other sweet drinks
• Honey
• Cow’s milk
• Soy milk
• Goat’s milk

Choking hazards:
• Chunks of meat or cheese
• Whole grapes
• Hot dogs
• Popcorn
• Raw vegetables
• Hard or sticky candy
• Nuts (whole or chopped)
• Thickly spread or chunky peanut butter

Safety tips
• Feed with a small rubber-tipped spoon.
• Don’t feed right from the jar or pouch:
  o Put a small amount on a clean dish. After baby is done, throw away anything that’s left. (Baby’s saliva can spoil leftovers.)
  o Refrigerate any food left in the original container for no more than 2 days.
• Don’t put pacifiers or baby utensils in your mouth. This increases your baby’s risk for infections and cavities.
• Learn what to do if your baby is choking. Consider taking a first-aid class.
# Food guide for your baby’s first year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth to 4–6 months</th>
<th>Around 6 months</th>
<th>6–8 months</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Give your baby a vitamin D supplement if you breastfeed only.</td>
<td>• Continue to feed your baby breast milk or formula. It’s their main source</td>
<td>• Continue breast and/or formula feeding.</td>
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<td>• Feed on demand after the first 2 weeks. A breast milk/formula feeding can be</td>
<td>of nutrition.</td>
<td>• Offer water in a cup with meals. Don’t give juice or other sweet drinks.</td>
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<td>from 3 to 7 to ounces.</td>
<td>• Offer small spoonfuls of mashed avocado, banana, or pureed sweet potato.</td>
<td>• Offer new foods, such as scrambled eggs, cottage cheese, or soft tofu.</td>
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<td>• Watch for signs of hunger, such as alertness, rooting, mouthing.</td>
<td>• Offer infant oatmeal or other whole-grain infant cereal (mix with breast</td>
<td>• Mix mashed banana and plain whole-milk yogurt. If there are no allergy</td>
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<td>• Watch for signs that baby is full (turning head away, pulling back from the</td>
<td>milk or formula).</td>
<td>concerns, you can also mix in a small amount of smooth peanut butter.</td>
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<td>nipple). Babies know when to stop eating.</td>
<td>• Offer other single-item purees, such as fruits, vegetables, meats, beans, and</td>
<td>• Continue to offer a variety of foods. Babies usually need to try a food</td>
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<td>• Always hold your baby when giving a bottle.</td>
<td>plain whole-milk yogurt.</td>
<td>10+ times before accepting it.</td>
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<td>• Don’t give extra water, or anything else to drink.</td>
<td>• If there are no allergy concerns (serious eczema; egg allergy), you can</td>
<td>• Don’t add sugar or salt to foods.</td>
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<td>introduce peanut products. Follow the directions on My Doctor Online.</td>
<td>• Let baby start to feed themselves. A meal of solid foods can be from 4</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>to 7 tablespoons.</td>
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<td>8–10 months</td>
<td>• Continue breastfeeding as long as you are both enjoying it.</td>
<td>• Stop giving your baby formula. Replace with 4 ounces of whole milk or</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Feed your baby solid foods before giving breast milk or formula. A meal can be</td>
<td>• Offer mashed or chopped foods from the family table, such as:</td>
<td>full-fat soy milk.</td>
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<td>5 to 8 tablespoons.</td>
<td>o Whole-grain breads</td>
<td>• Don’t give juice or other sweet drinks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Give water. Don’t give juice or other sweet drinks.</td>
<td>o Fruits</td>
<td>• Serve drinks only in a cup.</td>
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<td>• Offer different fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.</td>
<td>o Cooked vegetables, soft meats, chicken, fish, tofu</td>
<td>• Give 2 to 3 healthy small meals a day plus snacks. A meal of solid foods</td>
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<td>• Try finger foods, such as:</td>
<td>o Beans</td>
<td>can be from 8 to 16 tablespoons.</td>
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<td>o Soft shredded or grated cheese</td>
<td>o Cooked eggs</td>
<td>• Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables during the day.</td>
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<td>o Whole-grain toast squares with thinly spread peanut or other nut butter, or</td>
<td>• Let your baby sit at the family table and use a spoon or hands to feed</td>
<td>• Offer healthy foods at regular times and let your child decide how much</td>
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<td>hummus</td>
<td>themselves. A meal can be from 6 to 12 tablespoons.</td>
<td>to eat. It’s normal for your child’s appetite to change.</td>
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<td>o Scrambled eggs</td>
<td>• Try not to pressure your baby to eat, and keep mealtimes relaxed.</td>
<td>• Sit together at the table to eat, without distractions, such as phones</td>
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<td>o Soft pieces of fruit</td>
<td>• Slowly reduce the number of feedings from breast or bottle as your baby eats</td>
<td>or TV.</td>
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<td>o Cooked vegetables</td>
<td>more food and drinks using a cup.</td>
<td>• Don’t bribe or reward your child with food.</td>
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<td>o Ground or finely chopped cooked chicken, fish, or tofu</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Cooked beans</td>
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**Other resources:** ✓ Download our app, [My Doctor Online](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/my-doctoronline/id1486762283), at the App Store or Google Play. ✓ Visit [kp.org/mydoctor](https://kp.org/mydoctor) for more resources.