



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, they’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 daily.

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. Don’t substitute other kinds of milk (like cow’s, goat’s, or soy) until they’re at least 12 months old.

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—they watch you eat, reach for food, and open their mouth.

Foods to offer. When your baby’s ready, you can safely introduce these foods in any order:

- Pureed or soft, mashed vegetables and fruits. (Even if your baby doesn’t like a food at first, keep offering.)
- Whole-milk yogurt or cottage cheese.
- Shredded cheese.

It’s important to offer foods with iron, such as:

- Pureed meat or beans.
- Iron-fortified infant oatmeal, or another fortified whole-grain infant cereal, mixed with breast milk or formula.

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 fruit without sweeteners. Babies don’t need other sweet foods or desserts.

About food allergies

We used to recommend waiting to introduce some foods until babies were older. Now 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 way 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 serious eczema or an 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

Safety tips

- Feed with a small rubber-tipped spoon.
- Don’t feed right from a jar or pouch. Instead:
 - Put a small amount on a clean dish. After they’re done, throw away anything that’s left. (Their saliva can spoil leftovers.)
 - 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 baby is choking. Consider taking a first aid class.

Don’t give these foods:

- Honey, as it can make babies very sick
- **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

Food guide for your baby's first year

Birth to 4–6 months	Around 6 months	6–8 months
<p>Breast milk and/or formula are the only things your baby needs at this age.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give your baby a vitamin D supplement if you breastfeed only. • Feed on demand after the first 2 weeks. A breast milk/formula feeding can be from 3 to 7 to ounces. • Watch for signs of hunger, such as alertness, rooting, mouthing. • Watch for signs baby is full (turning head away, pulling back from the nipple). Babies know when to stop eating. • Always hold your baby when giving a bottle. • Don't give extra water, or anything else to drink. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to feed your baby breast milk or formula. It's their main source of nutrition. • Offer small spoonfuls of foods like mashed avocado, banana, or pureed sweet potato. • Offer infant oatmeal or other iron-fortified whole-grain infant cereal (mix with breast milk or formula). • Offer other single-item purees, such as fruits, vegetables, meats, beans, and plain whole-milk yogurt. • Follow these directions for peanut products. If there are no allergy concerns (serious eczema; egg allergy), you can introduce peanut products. Don't give whole peanuts or chunky peanut butter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue breast and/or formula feeding. • Offer water in a cup with meals. Don't give juice or other sweet drinks. • Offer new foods, such as scrambled eggs, cottage cheese, or soft tofu. • Mix mashed banana and plain whole-milk yogurt. If there are no allergy concerns, you can mix in a small amount of smooth peanut butter. • Continue to offer a variety of foods. Babies usually need to try a food 10 or more times before accepting it. • Don't add sugar or salt to foods. • Let baby start to feed themselves. A meal of solid foods can be from 4 to 7 tablespoons. • Let baby decide when and how much to eat. Watch for signals your baby is hungry and full.
8–10 months	10–12 months	1 year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed your baby solid foods before giving breast milk or formula. A meal can be 5 to 8 tablespoons. • Give water. Don't give juice or other sweet drinks. • Offer different fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. • Try finger foods, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Soft shredded or grated cheese ◦ Whole-grain toast squares with thinly spread peanut or other nut butter, or hummus ◦ Scrambled eggs ◦ Soft pieces of fruit ◦ Cooked vegetables ◦ Ground or finely chopped cooked chicken, fish, or tofu ◦ Cooked beans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue breastfeeding as long as you're both enjoying it. • Offer mashed or chopped foods from the family table, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Whole-grain breads ◦ Fruits that are soft or cut into small pieces ◦ Cooked vegetables, soft meats, chicken, fish, tofu ◦ Beans ◦ Cooked eggs • Let your baby sit at the family table and use a spoon or hands to feed themselves. A meal can be from 6 to 12 tablespoons. • Try not to pressure your baby to eat, and keep mealtimes relaxed. • Slowly reduce the number of feedings from breast or bottle as your baby eats more food and drinks using a cup. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop giving your baby formula. Replace with whole milk or full-fat soy milk. Don't give more than 16 to 20 ounces of milk in 24 hours, due to the risk of anemia and constipation. • Continue breastfeeding as long as you're both enjoying it. • Don't give juice or other sweet drinks. • Serve drinks only in a cup. • Offer 2 to 3 meals a day plus snacks. A meal of solid foods at this age is small (about ½ cup to 1 cup total). • Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables during the day. • Let your child decide how much to eat. It's normal for their appetite to change from day to day. • Sit together at the table to eat without distractions like screens. • Don't bribe or reward with food.

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