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FOOD FOR YOUR BABY'S FIRST YEAR

A GUIDE FOR YOUR BABY'S NUTRITIONAL NEEDS



C H I L D R E N ' S H O M E S O C I E T Y O F C A L I F O R N I A

Good nutrition is very important for your baby's proper growth and development. This guide will help you make healthy choices about feeding your baby from birth to 12 months of age.



★ FEEDING YOUR BABY ★

AGE	DEVELOPMENTAL SKILLS	APPROPRIATE FOODS
Birth to 4 Months	Baby can suck and swallow, but tongue thrust reflex pushes out solid food	Breast milk and/or iron-fortified formula
4-6 Months	Baby can sit unsupported, and tongue thrust reflex is lessened <i>Talk to your pediatrician to see if your infant should begin to eat solid food</i>	Breast milk and/or iron-fortified formula, rice cereal, applesauce, strained and pureed bananas and pears
6-8 Months	Baby can munch food, and use thumb and index finger to pick up small pieces of food	Breast milk and/or iron-fortified formula, teething biscuits, mashed potatoes and avocados, strained and pureed peaches, carrots, and squash
8-12 Months	Baby can grind food with their teeth, hold a cup, and self-feeding skills improve	Breast milk and/or iron-fortified formula, rice cakes, bite-size cheese cubes, soft tortillas, scrambled eggs, oatmeal, yogurt, tofu, noodles, peas, strained and pureed or diced cooked chicken



★ THE BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

Human breast milk provides the perfect nutrition for your baby. In addition, there are many other benefits to breastfeeding for both baby and mother. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) now recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first four to six months, and continued breastfeeding for the first year and as long thereafter as desired. Breastfeeding provides the following benefits:

- Breast milk is more easily digested, and reduces vomiting and diarrhea.
- Breast milk provides protection against certain childhood diseases.
- Breast milk strengthens the immune system, reducing the likelihood of allergies, ear infections, urinary tract infections, and pneumonia.
- Breast milk reduces the risk of childhood obesity.
- Breastfeeding increases physical contact which promotes bonding between mother and baby.
- For mothers, breastfeeding reduces the risk of certain cancers, and builds bone strength.
- Breastfeeding needs no preparation.
- Breastfeeding is free.

Do not give babies sweetened drinks, sodas, gelatin, sugar water, or juice. The sugar in these drinks can cause serious tooth decay.

Never force your baby to finish a bottle. Throw away any formula left in the bottle. Offer small portions of food.





Do not give sweeteners, such as honey, corn syrups, or foods that contain these sweeteners (including cereals, graham crackers, and baked goods) to infants. They may contain spores that can cause infant botulism, a food poisoning that can lead to death.



★ SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING

Get support from your health care practitioner, local hospital, or lactation consultant. Just because breastfeeding is a natural option, this does not necessarily mean that educational support will not be needed. The following suggestions can encourage a successful start:

- Learn about breastfeeding before your baby is born.
- Breastfeed as soon as possible after your baby is born.
- Make sure your baby “latches on” correctly.
- Avoid giving your baby bottles of formula, water, or pacifiers until breastfeeding is well established.
- Breastfeed often to establish a strong milk supply.
- By using a breast pump, parents can continue to provide their babies with the benefits of breast milk.

★ MEAL TIMES

- Feeding time is a learning time for your baby.
- Be patient and attentive to your baby’s needs.
- When bottle-feeding, hold your baby close. Never prop a bottle.
- Never allow your baby to fall asleep with a bottle in their mouth. This can promote “baby bottle tooth decay.”
- Feed your baby in a space that is easy to clean up. Getting messy is a normal part of learning to eat.
- Babies do not need desserts like pudding, custard, or cobbler.

★ INTRODUCING NEW FOODS

- Start one new food at a time.
- Wait about five days before giving the next new food to detect possible allergic reactions. Possible allergic reactions to foods include: skin rash, vomiting, respiratory problems, and diarrhea. Foods that commonly cause allergic reactions include: cow’s milk, citrus juice and fruits, egg whites, tree nuts, peanuts, soy, wheat, and shell fish.
- You may need to introduce the same food many different times before your baby accepts it.



TO LEARN MORE

BOOKS

THE ART OF BREASTFEEDING

La Leche League International

HEALTHY FOODS, HEALTHY KIDS

Elizabeth M. Ward, M.S., R.D.

CARING FOR YOUR BABY AND YOUNG CHILD

American Academy of Pediatrics/Steven P. Shelov, M.D., M.S., F.A.A.P.

ORGANIZATIONS

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