

Feeding your baby



6–12 months





Is your baby ready for solid food?

Although breast milk or formula should still provide most of your baby's calories, at about six months your baby may be ready to start eating solid foods.

Your baby may be ready when he can:

- Grasp and hold onto things.
- Sit up well with support.
- Hold his head steady.
- Swallow food from a spoon.
- Begin to chew.
- Use a cup with help.

Your baby's eating habits will change a lot! He will begin to eat more food and drink less breast milk or formula.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Let your baby feed himself with a spoon or his hands.
- Don't stress about the mess.

Tips for starting solid foods

Introducing new foods one at a time allows your baby time to adjust and accept the new experience. It allows you to watch for possible reactions to a new food.

When introducing a new food:

- Offer only one, single ingredient food at a time.
- Allow at least five days before introducing another new food.
- Start with a small amount, one to two teaspoons, of the new food once a day.

If your baby doesn't want to eat a new food, try offering it again in a few days. Your baby may need to try a new food 10 to 16 times before liking it.

Don't feed your baby honey (or give her a pacifier dipped in honey) or foods with honey added, like graham crackers and cereal. Honey has bacteria that cause botulism. Botulism can make your baby very sick.





Watch for food reactions

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 you have a family history of food allergies, your baby may be at higher risk.

Signs of a food reaction are:

- Diarrhea.
- Vomiting.
- Stomach pain.
- Skin rashes, like 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 five days, continue feeding your baby that food and start another new food.

Foods that may cause a reaction

- Foods that contain peanuts or nuts, like peanut butter, candy, and baked goods, such as peanut butter cookies.
- Fish and other seafood.
- Foods that contain wheat, like toast or bread, noodles, teething biscuits, soft tortillas, and zwieback.
- Foods that contain corn, like whole or cream corn, soft tortillas, and grits.
- Egg whites.
- Soy products, like soy drinks and tofu.
- Citrus fruits, like oranges.
- Strawberries.

Foods that may cause choking

Your child could choke on hard or round foods, such as:

- Raw vegetables, like carrots or celery.
- Fruits with skin or a peel, like apples.
- Chicken bones.
- Nuts.
- Potato, corn, or tortilla chips.
- Hard candies.
- Cookies.
- Dried fruits, like raisins.

Round foods like grapes or hotdogs should be cut up into small pieces.



Breast milk or formula

Between 6 and 12 months most of the calories your baby needs still come from breast milk or formula. It is common for your baby to change his feeding patterns from day to day as he grows. Babies should be breast or formula fed when they show signs of hunger. You can expect to feed your baby breast milk or formula about 6 times in a 24 hour period. This would provide formula fed babies a total of about 24–32 ounces a day.

Sugary drinks are not for babies.

Sugary drinks, like sodas, fruit punch, sports drinks and juice should not be offered to babies under one year of age. They can make your baby less hungry for the healthy foods that help her grow. Sugary drinks can harm her teeth.

Take care of your baby's mouth

- After each feeding and before bedtime, clean your baby's teeth and gums with a clean wet cloth or small toothbrush.
- If you are breastfeeding, take your baby off your breast after he falls asleep.
- If you put your baby to bed with a bottle, only fill it with water.
- Don't share cups and eating utensils, pre-chew food, or put a pacifier in your mouth before giving it your baby. Germs that cause tooth decay pass through your saliva.
- Water is a good choice for practicing drinking from a cup.

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 six months after your baby's first tooth appears, or no later than one year of age.





6–7 months

Mix first foods with a little breast milk or formula at first. As your baby learns to eat from a spoon, make the mixture thicker.

Here are some good first foods to feed your baby:

- Iron-fortified single grain infant cereal
- Strained or pureed meats, fruits, and vegetables

Offer your baby cereal in a bowl and not from a bottle. Feeding him from a spoon helps your baby learn how to eat. You do not need to add sugar or salt to your baby's food.

Teach your baby to use a cup. Start teaching your baby to drink water from a small cup when she is around 6–7 months old. Give baby a small amount of breast milk, formula, or water to drink with her food.

7–8 months

Some good foods to feed your baby are strained or pureed:

- Cooked beans, like pinto or navy beans
- Veggies, like sweet potatoes, carrots, and green beans
- Fruits, like apples, peaches, and pears



You can also try:

- Cooked egg yolk mashed with breast milk, iron-fortified formula, or plain yogurt.
- Cottage cheese.
- Plain yogurt.
- Mashed tofu.



8–10 months

Your baby may be ready for foods with more texture when she can:

- Take a bite of food.
- Pick up finger foods and feed herself.
- Use a cup.



8–10 month sample menu

Breakfast

- 2–4 T baby cereal mixed with breast milk or formula
- 2–4 T applesauce

Morning snack

- 1 T small pieces of soft cheese
- 2–4 T baby food vegetables

Lunch

- 1–2 T cooked egg yolk, mashed with 2–4 T cooked potato and chicken broth
- 1/2 whole wheat tortilla, cut into small pieces

Afternoon snack

- 2–4 T baby cereal mixed with breast milk or formula
- 2–4 T chopped banana

Dinner

- 1–2 T small pieces cooked ground beef
- 2 T cooked chopped noodles
- 2–4 T chopped soft cooked broccoli

Evening snack

- 2–4 T baby food fruit

T = Tablespoon

10–12 months

Your baby may be ready for more textured foods when he can:

- Chew and swallow soft, mashed, and chopped foods.
- Use a cup.
- Start to use a spoon.



10–12 month sample menu

Breakfast

- 2–4 T baby cereal mixed with breast milk or formula
- 3–4 T small peeled peach slices

Morning snack

- 2–4 T baby food vegetables

Lunch

- 2–4 T cooked ground beef
- 2 T mashed potato mixed with 2 T baby food vegetables
- 3–4 T small pieces soft cooked carrots

Afternoon snack

- 2–4 T dry cereal
- 3–4 T small peeled ripe pear pieces

Dinner

- 2–3 T mashed pinto beans
- 1/2 soft tortilla with melted cheese, cut into small pieces
- 3–4 T small pieces soft cooked zucchini

Evening snack

- 2–4 T baby food fruit

T = Tablespoon



The whole family can start good mealtime habits.

- Set regular meal times.
- Have your baby sit at the table with the family.
- Turn off the TV and cell phones during mealtime.

For help finding nutrition resources, call:



Family Health Hotline
1-800-322-2588 711 TTY relay

www.ParentHelp123.org

Programs of WithinReach



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Child Profile is a program of the Washington State Department of Health.

If you have a disability and need this document in another format, please call 1-800-322-2588 (TTY call 711).