



Who can I contact with my breastfeeding questions?

- Your hospital, doctor, midwife, or WIC staff
- Washington WIC breastfeeding support: www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/WIC/BreastfeedingSupport
- Le Leche League 24-hour National Helpline (1-877-452-5324)

For help finding nutrition resources, or to find out if you are eligible for WIC or SNAP, call:

 WithinReach Family Health Hotline
1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay)
 or www.ParentHelp123.org



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 (711 TTY relay).

Feeding Your Baby



Birth to six months



Feeding is a special bonding time for you and your baby. Talk to your baby, hold him or her close, and look into his or her eyes. This helps your baby feel secure and loved.

What do I feed my baby for the first six months?

Breastmilk is the only food your baby needs for the first six months.

It is the healthiest food for your baby. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends breastfeeding for at least the first year of life, and slowly adding solid foods at around six months.

If you aren't able to breastfeed or pump breastmilk for your baby, feed infant formula with iron to keep your baby's blood, brain, and body healthy.

Ask your doctor if your baby needs an iron or vitamin D supplement.

How do I know when my baby is hungry and when he or she has had enough to eat?

Your baby will help you figure out how much he or she needs to eat. As you get to know your baby, you'll recognize these cues and be able to respond to his or her needs. **Trust that your baby will let you know when he or she is hungry and when he or she has had enough to eat.**

Your baby is hungry when he or she:

- Sucks on his or her hand.
- Leans his or her head toward your breast, arm, or bottle (roots).
- Smacks his or her lips.
- Seems fussy or unhappy.
- Cries (this is a late sign of hunger).

Your baby has had enough when he or she:

- Stops sucking and closes his or her lips.
- Turns his or her head away from your breast or bottle.
- Falls asleep.
- Relaxes his or her body and opens his or her hands.



How can I keep breastfeeding when I go back to work or school?

Talk to your boss or school staff about making a breastfeeding plan. Before going back:

- Find out if your health insurance or employer provides breast pumps and other breastfeeding support. WIC provides breast pumps for WIC clients.
- Ask your boss, school staff, or human resources department where you can pump.
- Make sure the place you pump is private and has electricity.
- Make a plan to store your breastmilk.
- Talk to your child care provider about how they support breastfeeding. Ask how they handle breastmilk and if moms are welcome to nurse on site.

Laws protect a mom's right to express breastmilk at work and school.

Learn more about your rights and find information about pumping breastmilk at www.withinreachwa.org/work-and-breastfeeding

How can I feed my baby when we are out and about?

Washington State law protects your right to breastfeed in public—anywhere and anytime.

If you're at a store or business and want privacy, ask if there's a mother's area.

If you are formula-feeding, bring a bottle with water and carry pre-measured formula for easy mixing when your baby is ready to eat. Hold your baby when feeding him or her. Don't prop the bottle in your baby's mouth or let your baby bottle-feed on his or her own. Your baby may choke or get ear infections.



How much do I feed my baby?

Your baby's tummy is small, so he or she needs to eat often. During your baby's growth spurts, your baby will give you cues that he or she wants to eat more. The more you breastfeed, the more milk your body makes. If you formula-feed your baby, he or she may drink one or two more ounces than usual during a feeding. **Watch for cues, and trust your baby to let you know when he or she has had enough to eat.**

AGE	BREASTFEEDING	FORMULA FEEDING
Birth to 4 months	Once every 2–3 hours About 8–12 times per day	Once every 2–3 hours About 2–3 ounces at each feeding
4 to 6 months	Once every 3–4 hours About 6–8 times per day	Once every 3–4 hours About 4–6 ounces at each feeding

What are the benefits of breastfeeding?

The longer you breastfeed, the greater the health benefits for you and your baby.

The benefits last a lifetime.

- Breastfeeding helps prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Breastfed babies have fewer colds, ear infections, and allergies.
- Babies who breastfeed have a lower risk of obesity.
- Women who breastfeed lower their risk of breast cancer.
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes for both mom and baby.

When is my baby ready for solid foods?

Talk to your doctor about when your baby might be ready for solid foods.

Babies are ready to eat solid foods when they are about six months old. Starting solid foods too early can cause constipation, choking, obesity, and other health problems. Watch for signs and cues that your baby is ready to eat solid foods when he or she:

- Sits with support.
- Holds his or her head up and steady.
- Opens his or her mouth to food.
- Takes food from a spoon.

As you start feeding your baby solid food, remember most of his or her nutrition should still come from breastmilk or formula. Breastmilk meets most of your baby's nutritional needs until he or she is about six months old.

How do I start introducing solid foods?

Give your baby all the breastmilk or formula he or she wants before giving your baby solid foods. Two or three times a day, try mixing one teaspoon of baby food meat or infant cereal with two tablespoons of breastmilk or infant formula. Start by making the mixture thin so that your baby can learn to eat it easily. As your baby learns to eat from a spoon, you can make it a little thicker.

Introduce one new food at a time.

Wait three days before offering another new food. This helps you see if your baby has an allergic reaction to a certain food. An allergic reaction can be a rash, vomiting, or diarrhea.