

# Food to Grow On

## BIRTH TO 12 MONTHS

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, and that breastfeeding continue for at least 12 months and beyond.

	Breast Milk or Iron-Fortified Infant Formula	Grain Products	Vegetables	Fruit	Protein-Rich Food	Water
Age						
Birth to 6 months	<p><u>Newborns breastfed:</u> 8-12 times/day</p> <p><u>Formula-fed babies:</u> 2-3 ounces of formula every 3-4 hours and by 6 months consume 32 ounces per day</p>	None	None	None	None	Babies under 6 months of age should not be given extra water. Breast milk and/or formula provides all the fluid that the infant needs.
6 to 8 months	<p>Breastfed babies continue to breastfeed on demand</p> <p>Formula-fed babies take in about 24-32 ounces</p> <p>Intake of breast milk or formula may decrease as complementary foods increase</p>	About 1-2 ounces of iron-fortified baby cereals, bread, or small pieces of crackers	About 2-4 ounces of cooked, plain, strained, pureed, or mashed vegetables	About 2-4 ounces of plain, strained, pureed, or mashed fruits	<p>About 1-2 ounces of meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cheese, yogurt, or legumes</p> <p>All are plain, strained, pureed, or mashed</p>	Babies can have small amounts of water in an open cup once complementary foods are introduced. Check with a doctor to determine how much and how often water may be given.
8 to 12 months	<p>Guide and encourage breastfeeding mothers and continue to support mothers who choose breastfeeding beyond 12 months</p> <p>Formula-fed babies take in about 24 ounces</p> <p>Formula can be offered in a cup</p>	About 2-4 ounces of iron-fortified baby cereals and other grains (e.g., baby crackers, bread, noodles, corn, grits, and soft tortilla pieces)	About 4-6 ounces of ground, finely chopped, or diced vegetables	About 4-6 ounces of ground, finely chopped, or diced fruits	<p>About 2-4 ounces of meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cheese, yogurt, or mashed legumes</p> <p>All are ground, finely chopped, or diced</p>	Babies can have small amounts of water in an open cup once complementary foods are introduced. Check with a doctor to determine how much and how often water may be given.

**NOTE:** Information in this handout is a general guideline for the healthy and full-term baby. Serving sizes may vary with individual babies. For more information on feeding your baby, please contact your local agency, your baby's doctor, or visit <https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/resources/infant-nutrition-and-feeding-guide>.

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## Feeding Tips for 0-6 months

- Babies need breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula for the first year.
- The bottle is for breast milk or formula only.
- Growth spurts are times when your baby may drink more breast milk or formula than usual. Growth spurts usually happen around 2-4 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months.
- Talk to your baby's doctor about how and when to give a vitamin D supplement.

## Introduction of Solid Foods

Feeding your baby solid foods is an exciting step. Wait until your baby is around 6 months of age to start solid foods. Your doctor may suggest starting earlier if your baby is showing signs of readiness. WIC does not provide food for your baby before 6 months of age.

## Early introduction of solid foods before 4 months of age can:

- Cause choking.
- Cause a baby to drink less than the appropriate amount of breast milk or formula.
- Increase risk for obesity.

## You will know your baby is ready for solid foods when he or she:

- Has head and neck control.
- Sits up, either alone or with some support.
- Opens the mouth when sees spoon approaching.
- Brings things to the mouth.
- Tries to grasp small objects (e.g., toys and food).
- Transfers food from the front to the back of the tongue to swallow.
- Swallows food rather than pushing it back out.



## Tips for Starting Solid Foods:

- Always feed baby foods from a spoon.
- Start with baby foods such as iron-fortified cereal or baby meat. Baby cereals can be mixed with breast milk, formula, or water.
- Start with small servings of 0.5-1 ounce (approximately 1-2 tablespoons) once a day when your baby becomes developmentally ready at about 6 months and gradually increase amount.
- Introduce one new, single-ingredient food at a time to determine the baby's acceptance of each food. Allow 3-5 days between the introduction of each new, single-ingredient food to observe for possible allergic reactions.
- Introduce mixed grain cereals after your baby has tried each grain separately.
- Offer food your baby has refused again in a week or two. It may take more than 10 repeated exposures to a new food for your baby to accept the food.
- Watch for signs that your baby is full. Turning head away from food, closing mouth, pushing food away, and slowing down eating are signs your baby is full.

## References:

Infant Nutrition and Feeding: A Guide for Use in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), USDA, FNS, WIC. FNS-288. April 2019. USDA Breastfeeding Support, Cluster feeding and what to expect during baby's growth spurts. <https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/cluster-feeding-and-growth-spurts>.

## Common Foods That Cause Choking

Vegetables	Fruits	Protein-Rich Foods	Grain Products	Other Foods and Snacks
Small pieces of raw vegetables; Raw green peas; Cooked or uncooked whole corn kernels	Whole grapes, cherries, berries, melon balls, and cherry tomatoes	Hot dogs, meat sticks, and sausages; Peanuts, nuts, and seeds; Chunks or spoonfuls of peanut butter; Other nut and seed butters	Plain wheat germ; Whole grain kernels; Crackers and breads with seeds; Hard pretzels	Hard or round candy; Jelly beans, caramels, gum drops, and gummy or sticky candy; Chewy fruit snacks; Chewing gum; Marshmallows; Potato or corn chips; Popcorn; Ice cubes
				

## Foods to Avoid in the First 12 months:

- Added salt, oil, butter, other fats, or seasoning.
- Added sugar, syrups, honey, and other sweeteners.
- Fried foods, gravies, sauces, and processed meats.
- Milk, juice, soda, gelatin, coffee, tea, fruit punches, or "ade" drinks.



## Important to Remember:

- Serve baby foods immediately. Store uneaten, opened baby foods in the refrigerator and use within 48 hours. Use baby meats within 24 hours.
- Use a blender, strainer, or baby food grinder to make baby food. Pre-chewing is not a safe way to offer foods.
- Provide foods from all the food groups along with human milk or infant formula to keep them healthy by 7 or 8 months of age.
- Feed your baby eggs for an excellent source of protein. Take special care when introducing eggs to make sure your baby does not experience an allergic reaction.
- Wipe baby's gums and teeth with a damp cloth or baby's toothbrush after giving a bottle at nap or bedtime. This will help prevent tooth decay.
- Keep bottles out of bedtime and nap routine to avoid exposing baby's teeth to sugar and reduce the risk for ear infections and choking.
- Cook meat, poultry, and fish thoroughly.
- Be patient. Accept that your baby will make a mess when eating. It's a natural part of learning.