

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.