

Feeding Your Baby Birth to 1 Year – What, When and How Much?

Birth to 6 Months Old

Your baby needs only breast milk for the first 6 months of life. It will provide them with all their nutritional needs. Solid foods should not be introduced before 6 months old. Breastfeeding offers health benefits to both baby and mom. Breast milk is the most nutritious food you can offer your baby. If you are having challenges with breastfeeding, please talk to your doctor or call the breastfeeding support line at 303-636-2929. If you are unable to breastfeed, use iron-fortified infant formula.

Allow your baby to feed on demand. This means to follow your baby's cues that they are hungry. Not every cry means a baby is hungry; learn to understand your baby's cues for hunger.

- **First few days or weeks:**
 - Breastfeed every 3 hours (about 8 to 10 feedings in a 24-hour period). These early feedings may last only a few minutes.
 - Formula-fed newborns may have slightly fewer feedings, around 2 to 3 ounces of formula every 3 to 4 hours during the first few weeks.
- **A few weeks to 4 months old:**
 - About 8-10 feedings a day and around of 2-6 oz/feeding (feedings will gradually become longer and less frequent).
- **4-6 months old:**
 - About 4-6 feedings a day and around 4-6oz/feeding or a total of 27-36oz/day.

How do I know if my baby is getting enough to eat?

Your baby knows how much to eat and your baby's appetite can vary from day to day.

Signs that your baby is full:

- Turning her head.
- Covering her mouth.
- Losing interest in feeding.

Don't force her to finish the bottle. Normal growth measured at check-ups and 6-8 wet diapers a day are good signs your baby is getting enough to eat. Never prop a bottle. Use feeding times to snuggle and coo at your baby.

Can I continue to breastfeed when I return to work?

Yes, it is possible to continue giving your child breast milk while you work. Make a breastfeeding plan before you return to work. Plan for:

- Problems that could keep you from pumping at work.
- Where you will pump.
- Scheduling your day to pump.
- The number of times you pump at work should be equal to the number of feedings your baby will need while you are away. This will help you make enough milk for your childcare provider to feed your baby while you are at work.
- Can you go feed your baby during the work day at your childcare?

Whenever you are with your baby, you can still breastfeed. View the video “Breastfeeding and Working- An Overview” at www.YouTube.com/user/cobfcvideos. Moms tell their stories about how and why they continued breastfeeding after going back to work.

Does my baby need nutritional supplements?

Breastfed babies and babies getting less than 32 oz formula per day need Vitamin D drops to provide 400IU of vitamin D daily. Other supplements are usually not needed.

For more information on breastfeeding and newborn care visit:

https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/static/health/pdfs/pregnancy/issue_10_postpartum.pdf

6 to 8 Months Old

Your baby might be ready for solid foods at 6 months old. Check with your doctor if you are not certain, or if your baby was born prematurely.

How do I know my baby is ready for solids?

Your baby is ready if she is:

- Sitting up with support.
- Showing interest in what you are eating.
- Opening mouth when fed with a spoon.

How do I start solid foods?

Begin with iron fortified baby cereals.

- Start with 1 tbsp of infant cereal mixed with 4 tbsp breast milk or formula. The cereal will be very thin.
- Begin with one meal a day of 2-3 tbsp and work up to 2 feedings a day.
- If your baby is not interested, try again in a few days.
- Gradually make the cereal a thicker consistency.
- Never put cereal or other food in a bottle. This may interfere with your baby’s normal appetite.

Watch for signs to tell when your baby is full. When you increase the amount of solid foods, your baby will not need as much breast milk or formula.

Adding new foods

Add one new food every 2-3 days. Watch for any allergic reactions. Signs of an allergic reaction include: diarrhea, rash, or vomiting. If any of these occur, stop using the new food and consult with your child’s doctor.

- Meats and vegetables generally contain more nutrients than fruits or cereals.
- Babies need extra iron and zinc in their diet by 6 months of age. Introduce meats early because they have zinc and iron. Offer 2 servings of iron-rich foods daily (meats and infant cereals).
- Breast milk or formula intake will decrease as your child increases solid foods.

How can I help my baby develop good eating habits?

- Start the habit of family meals now. Eat, talk and laugh together at the table without television or other distractions.
- Only offer meals and snacks at the table with your baby seated in the highchair.
- Your job as a parent is to offer healthy foods, your child decides how much to eat.
 - Watch for signs that your baby is full: pushing food away, covering her face, turning her head away or spitting out food. "One more bite" is not necessary.
 - Your baby's appetite will vary day to day. Don't worry if they are not interested in solids at a meal. Wait until the next mealtime to offer solids again.
- Many babies will not like a food the first time you give it. Some foods may need to be given up to 10 times before your baby develops a taste for them.
- When the baby is 7 to 8 months old, offer her a variety of foods 3 times a day. Within a few months of starting solid foods, your baby's daily diet should include a variety of nutrient rich foods each day. Their diet should include the following:
 - Breast milk and /or formula
 - Meats, eggs and fish
 - Iron fortified cereals
 - Vegetables
 - Fruits

These are general guidelines. The amount your baby needs may vary and appetites can vary from day to day. Follow your baby's hunger cues.

Average portion sizes and daily servings for 6-8 month olds

Food group	Foods	Daily Servings	Portion size
Breast milk or formula	Continue, will decrease as solid food increases.	3-5 feedings	6-8 oz/feeding 24-32 oz/day
Grain	Infant cereal, soft cooked starches	2	1-2 crackers ¼ slice bread 2-3 tbsp infant cereal
Fruit and Vegetable	Plain cooked or mashed fruit or vegetables	2-4	2-3 tbsp
Meat or other protein	Strained, chicken, beef, fish, pork, beans, tofu	1-2	1-2 tbsp

Sample menu for 6-8 month olds

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
2 tbsp prepared infant cereal with 1-2 tbsp pureed fruit	2 tbsp strained meat 1 tbsp strained vegetable or fruit	2 tbsp prepared infant cereal with 1-2 tbsp strained vegetable
Continue breast milk or formula		

Can my baby have juice and water?

Offer water if your child is thirsty, rather than juice or other sugary drinks. Fruit juice, fruit drinks, soda pop all contain sugars which cause a preference for sweet foods and also can damage teeth. Offer water in a cup to be able to stop bottle feeding by 12 months old.

Can I make my own baby food?

If you want to give your baby homemade food, use a blender or food processor, or just mash softer foods with a fork.

- All fresh homemade foods should be cooked with no salt or seasoning added.
- You can feed your baby raw bananas (mashed), but most other fruits and vegetables should be cooked until they are soft.
- Refrigerate any food you do not use. Look for any signs of spoilage before giving it to your baby.
- Fresh or homemade foods will spoil more quickly than food from a can or jar.

9 to 12 Months Old

Introducing finger foods

Now is a good time to offer your baby finger foods.

- Finger foods are foods that your baby can eat without help.
- Learning to eat finger foods helps your baby become more independent and practice fine motor skills.
- Your baby is ready for finger foods when she can sit without help; can pick up small objects with her fingers; and can drink from a cup without help.

To avoid choking, make sure any food you give your baby is soft, easy to swallow, and cut into small pieces. Some examples include:

- Small pieces of banana or other soft skinless fruit
- Wafer-type cookies or crackers
- Scrambled eggs
- Well-cooked pasta
- Well-cooked chicken or ground beef, finely chopped
- Well-cooked and cut up vegetables such as yellow squash, peas, beans and potatoes
- Shredded cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese

Again, add one new food every 2-3 days. Watch for any allergic reactions. Signs of an allergic reaction include: diarrhea, rash, or vomiting. If any of these occur, stop using the new food and consult with your child's doctor.

How can I help my baby develop good eating habits?

- At each of your baby's daily meals, offer a variety of foods and colors.
- The amount of food and the types of food your baby eats will vary. Keep offering different foods, as taste buds change over time.
- Remember to eat healthy yourself. You are the role model and your child will learn from you and the foods you are eating.
- Continue family meals, offering food only at the table and start to serve food from the family dinner (soft and cut up to avoid choking). Babies will learn to eat the foods your family enjoys.

What foods should I avoid or delay feeding my baby?

There is no evidence that delaying introduction of certain foods will decrease the chance of developing food allergies. Talk to your doctor if you have a strong family history of allergies.

- Do not offer cow's milk until your baby is one year old. Cow's milk can cause anemia.
- Do not offer honey before one year because it is a risk for botulism.
- Due to choking risk, do not offer hot dogs, whole nuts, hard candies, popcorn, grapes, raw carrots, chunky peanut butter and large pieces of raw fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid foods with added salt and sugar.

What is the right amount to feed my baby?

These are general guidelines. The amount your baby needs may vary and appetites can vary from day to day. Follow your baby's hunger cues.

Average portion sizes and daily servings for 6-8 month olds

Food group	Foods	Daily Servings	Portion size
Breast milk or formula	Continue	3-4 feedings	6-8 oz /feeding Total 24-32 oz/day
Grain	Iron fortified infant cereal, pasta, rice, crackers	3-4	2-4 tbsp infant cereal 1/3 slice bread 2 crackers 1/4 c pasta, rice
Fruit and Vegetable	Soft, cut up and mashed fruits and vegetables No more than 4 oz 100% fruit juice from a bottle/day	4	3-4 tbsp
Meat or other protein	Pureed or soft/finely cut chicken, beef, pork, beans or tofu	2	3-4 tbsp

Sample menu for 9-12 month olds

Breakfast	Snack	Lunch	Dinner
2-4 tbsp prepared infant cereal 4 tbsp mashed banana	2 tbsp avocado	2-4 tbsp diced turkey 2 tbsp well cooked pasta tbsp soft vegetables	2-4 tbsp soft-cooked carrots 2-4 tbsp mashed potatoes
Continue breast milk or formula			

What about activity?

It is not too early to encourage physical activity! Avoid television under the age of two. Give your baby time to explore on a floor play mat and limit use of restrictive “exersaucers” and “bouncy seats.”

Where can I get more information?

- Call Kaiser Permanente Pediatric Nutrition Services – Pediatric Dietitians at 303-614-1070 or visit kphealthyme.com.
- For support or information on breastfeeding please call 303-636-2929.