

Nutrition for Kids' LIFE

Feeding Your Baby from Six to Twelve Months

Now is the time, around the middle of the first year, to begin offering your baby foods. This feeding guide developed by health experts will help you keep up with your little one's growing abilities and nutrition needs.

Continue breastfeeding your baby, or using formula. Don't give your baby cow's milk until 1 year of age.

6 TO 8 MONTHS OLD

Look for these signs that your baby is ready for solid foods. He can sit with support. He's starting to chew and keeps food in his mouth to swallow. He enjoys being a part of family meals.

Offer your infant small amounts of foods 2-3 times a day. Spoon-feed soft foods but let your baby feed himself food that is in small pieces. Some foods to offer at this time:

- Fortified infant cereal
- Strained or mashed, vegetables, fruits and meats
- Sticky rice and mashed potatoes
- Dry cereals and graham crackers

8 TO 10 MONTHS OLD

At this stage, your infant can sit alone. She can bite and chew food more easily. She begins curving her lip around the cup and uses a cup better. This is the time to offer foods that have more texture. There is no need to add salt, sugar, or fat to food.

Add these foods at meal time and snacks:

- Cooked vegetables and soft fruits, cut up
- Finely ground or small pieces of tender cooked meat, chicken and boned fish
- Small pieces of soft cheese
- Mashed cooked beans and lentils
- Strips of bread, toast, tortilla, bagels

10 TO 12 MONTHS OLD

At this age your little one can pick up small pieces of food more easily. He drinks from a covered toddler cup. Feeding is not as messy because he controls the spoon and the food in his mouth better.

Your baby will enjoy foods from your family meals cut in small pieces:

- More kinds of cooked vegetables and soft fruits
- Tender chopped meats, poultry and boned fish
- Cooked dried beans, peas or lentils
- Soft-cooked pastas
- Cottage cheese and yogurt

It might take 8 to 10 tries for your baby to accept a new food, so don't give up! Look at your little one, talk to him and encourage him while he is feeding—even if the process gets messy at times!

By Beth H. Olson, Ph.D., MSU Extension Nutrition Specialist, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, 3/09



WHAT ABOUT ALLERGIES?

If you have a family history of allergies, talk to your doctor about foods not to give your baby. Introduce new foods one at a time. Watch your baby for two to four days before you start the next new food. If she has diarrhea, vomiting, rash, stomachache or trouble breathing, call your doctor right away.

DRINKING FROM A CUP

Begin teaching your baby to drink from a cup. Use a covered cup with no valve, handles and a weighted bottom. If you offer juice, use it as part of a snack or meal—no more than 4-6 ounces a day. Don't let your child carry the cup around. Sipping juice a lot can cause cavities.

FOOD SAFETY

- **Wash your hands and baby's hands with soap before feeding. Wash the high chair tray with hot, soapy water each time it is used.**
- **Do not feed directly from the baby jar. Put food in a dish and then throw away any food left uneaten in the dish. Refrigerate food remaining in the jar for up to 3 days.**
- **Your baby needs the safety of a grownup watching closely while he is eating. This also means more social time for him—and you!**
- **Don't give honey to your baby now. It can cause infant botulism, a deadly disease. Wait until he is one year old.**

HOW TO AVOID CHOKING

- **Seat your baby in a chair when feeding.**
- **Don't give foods that are round and firm, sticky or cut in large chunks.**
- **Some foods can get caught in a baby's throat. Don't give your baby nuts and seeds, popcorn, raw vegetables, whole grapes, cherries, hot dogs, chunks of meat or hard cheese, chunks of peanut butter, hard candy.**

FURTHER INFORMATION

USDA Food & Nutrition Information Center

<http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/>

Go to: Lifecycle Nutrition under "Subject", then go to: Infant Feeding

Infant and Toddler Nutrition

National Library of Medicine: MedlinePlus

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/infantandtoddlernutrition.html>

Kids Health – Nemours Foundation

www.kidshealth.org/parent/food/

Go to: Nutrition and Infants

