

Feeding Our Youngest

7 Months

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Your 7-month-old baby has probably started eating solid foods and is showing more interest in food and family mealtime. Last month, we talked about starting solids such as infant cereal. After your baby is comfortable with iron-fortified baby cereal, you will want to begin adding other foods to his diet. Vegetables and fruits are especially important for good health and now is the time to help your baby develop life-long healthy eating choices.

Enjoy that look of amazement when your baby first tastes a new vegetable. You may start with pureed fresh or frozen cooked vegetables, or you may decide to buy baby food at the store. If you do prepare your own baby foods, let baby experience the natural flavor of the vegetable without added salt or sugar. Canned vegetables have too much salt and it is hard for his young kidneys to handle it.

Remember to introduce new vegetables and fruits one at a time. Watch your baby closely for 3 to 5 days for any reaction. Wait on mixed food like mixed cereals, mixed vegetables, and dinners and dessert baby foods until your baby has tried each ingredient individually to make sure he can tolerate them.

Building Blocks: Liquids and Dental Care



Once your baby's teeth come in, they can develop cavities. Any liquid with sugar — added or naturally occurring — can cause tooth decay, so only offer breast milk or formula in a bottle or cup at mealtime. As mentioned last



month, babies don't need fruit juice until they are 12 months or older and then only 1 to 2 ounces from a cup. Too much juice too early can also affect your baby's appetite. He will be too full to eat and drink the other nutritious foods that he needs. Too much juice can also cause diarrhea.

Your baby also does not need beverages that are not good for his teeth or his growing body, such as:

- Soda pop and other sweetened liquids
- Beverages containing artificial sweeteners
- Caffeine-containing beverages — tea, coffee, and energy drinks
- Herbal teas

Dental care is a great habit to start early. Even if your baby doesn't have any teeth, you can gently clean his gums with a clean damp cloth or gauze pad after each meal and snack. To keep his gums

and teeth healthy, don't put him to bed with a bottle or no-spill cup. And if you do offer him a cup between meals and snacks, just offer water to avoid frequent exposures to cavity-causing liquids.

Your baby's food patterns will soon start to look like the eating habits of the rest of your family. He eats cereal one to two times a day, may be

eating fruits and vegetables, and may be working on picking up soft, "gummable" foods. Has baby joined the family at mealtime yet? Now is a great time! He will benefit not only from eating healthy food but also the social time.

Enjoy your baby's growing abilities while feeding your youngest!

Guidelines for Feeding Healthy Infants, Birth to 12 Months Old

Age	Human milk or infant formula	Grain products	Vegetables	Fruits	Protein-rich foods
Birth-6 months	Newborns breastfeed 8-12 times/day. Formula-fed infants should consume 2-3 ounces of formula every 3-4 hours and by 6 months consume 32 ounces/day.	None	None	None	None
6-8 months	Breastfed infants continue to breastfeed, on demand. Formula-fed infants take in about 24-32 ounces. Amounts vary based on individual nutrition assessment. Intake of human milk or formula may decrease as complementary foods increase.	About 1-2 ounces iron-fortified infant cereals, bread, small pieces of crackers	About 2-4 ounces of cooked, plain, strained/pureed/mashed vegetables	About 2-4 ounces of plain strained/pureed/mashed fruits	About 1-2 ounces meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cheese, yogurt, or legumes; all are plain strained/pureed/mashed.
8-12 months	Guide/encourage breastfeeding mothers and continue to support mothers who choose breastfeeding beyond 12 months. Formula-fed infants take in about 24 ounces. Amounts vary based on individual nutrition assessment.	About 2-4 ounces iron-fortified infant cereals; other grains: baby crackers, bread, noodles, corn, grits, soft tortilla pieces	About 4-6 ounces, ground/finely chopped/diced	About 4-6 ounces, ground/finely chopped/diced	About 2-4 ounces meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cheese, yogurt, or mashed legumes; all are ground/finely chopped/diced

Reprinted from USDA, WIC infant nutrition and feeding. April, 2019

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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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