

Feeding Our Youngest

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Thinking about Breastfeeding? Good for You and Baby Too!

Do you have questions about breastfeeding? Many moms do, even experienced ones. Here are some often-asked questions and answers from experts — and moms themselves!

Why should I breastfeed? Breastfeeding is important food for your baby — it provides custom-made food and medicine combined. Breast milk also changes as your baby grows. Breastfeeding:

- offers all the nutrients babies need for their best growth and development.
- helps babies fight off infections and illness **before** their immune system is fully developed and for as long as they breastfeed.
- provides everything your baby needs for the first six months of life.

Health benefits for baby:

- Healthier immune system.
- Breast milk is easier to digest than formula.
- Decreased risk for allergies.
- Helps brain development.
- Decreased risk of childhood obesity.

Babies who are breastfed or are fed expressed breast milk are at lower risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS, compared with babies who were never fed breast milk. According to research, the longer you exclusively breastfeed your baby (meaning not supplementing with formula or solid food), the lower his or her risk of SIDS. For more information, visit: https://www.nichd.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/Breast-feed_Baby_SIDS_final.pdf



Health benefits for the breastfeeding mom:

- Easier weight loss.
- Uterus returns to its normal size more quickly.
- Reduced risk of some types of cancer.
- Reduced risk of some chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Breastfeeding helps you and your baby know just how much they need to eat. Babies can tell when they have eaten enough, and breastfeeding moms learn to trust their baby's fullness cues.

Breastfeeding is important for mom, too! Breastfeeding, even for a short time, significantly lowers a woman's chance of Type 2 diabetes later in life. Breastfeeding helps reduce a mom's risk of certain breast and ovarian cancers. Women who

breastfeed are less likely to develop cardiovascular (heart) disease and also hypertension (high blood pressure) than mothers who never breastfed.

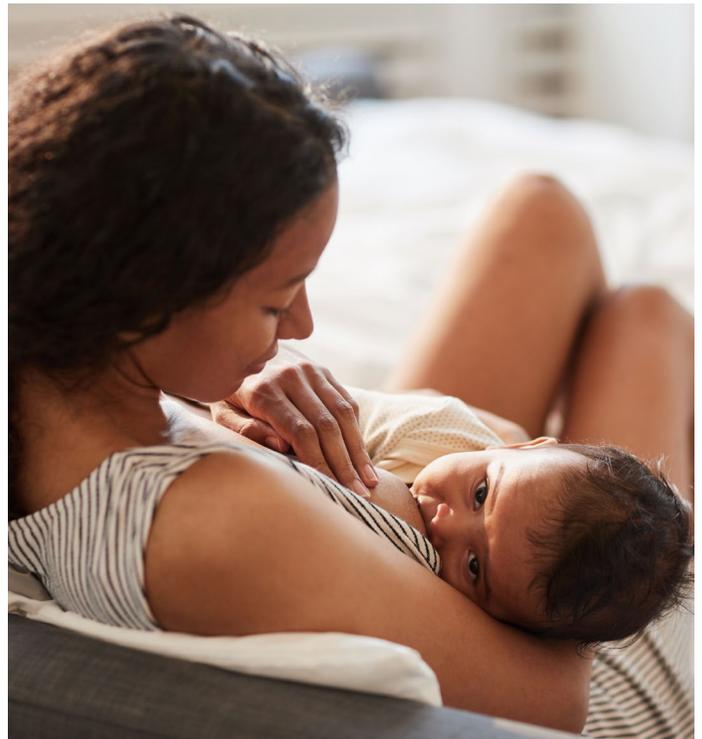
Feeding my baby is an important job! How will I know if I'm breastfeeding well enough? It is true — feeding your baby is very important, and there are several ways to know that you and your baby's breastfeeding partnership is working well! Remember, although breastfeeding is natural, it is a learned process for both you and your baby. You will both get better with just a little practice and patience on your part.

You can tell that baby is getting plenty of milk in a few ways. One way is weight gain. It's normal for a newborn to lose a little weight just after birth, but after several days, it is typical for babies to gain ½ ounce to one ounce each day up to age 3 months. Your baby will be weighed at every health check-up, so talk with your baby's health-care provider or clinician to be sure your baby is gaining the right amount of weight.

You will also be able to tell if your baby is getting enough breast milk by counting the number of wet and dirty diapers each day. The number of wet and dirty diapers increases at about day 3 or 4 after birth — typically to five or six wet diapers and three dirty diapers each day.

Speaking of dirty diapers: As your milk changes, your baby's poops will too. At first, poops will be black and tarry. Then they'll be greenish to yellowish. Then they will become yellow, loose, and seedy. Around 10 to 15 days after delivery, your baby may poop after every feeding or less often.

How often should I breastfeed my baby? Newborn babies breastfeed often, as much as 8 to 12 times in 24 hours. At birth, your baby's tummy holds only about a teaspoon, but it will gradually grow. (See Figure 1 on page 4.) Babies don't often eat at regular times, but your baby will let you know when he or she is hungry. Feed your baby when they show hunger signals, such as:



- restless movement during sleep,
- waking and alertness,
- opening mouth when lips are touched, or licking or smacking lips,
- sucking on fingers or fists,
- rooting or turning their head to search for mother's nipple.

A hungry baby will show signs of hunger **before** starting to cry, and it is reassuring to baby for breastfeeding to begin before they cry. Babies cry for many reasons and hunger is just one. Crying babies may need extra calming before they can successfully latch on to your breast and begin to breastfeed.

By feeding your baby often, your breasts will make more milk. Empty breasts make milk so there is no need to wait for your breasts to “fill up.” Early and frequent breastfeeding is the key to making plenty of milk.

Can I feed my baby both breast milk and formula? Feeding baby formula in the first month can make it difficult for your body to make enough breast milk. Each ounce of formula the baby takes is one less ounce of breast milk

your body will make. Also, if you give bottles too soon, baby may prefer the faster flow of milk from the bottle and get frustrated at your breast.

Does breastfeeding hurt? Breastfeeding is not supposed to be a painful experience. As with any new skill, there is an adjustment period, so you may have some discomfort in the beginning. But if you experience pain that last more than a few seconds, it is usually a red flag that something is wrong. It also means your baby may not be getting as much milk as they could. WIC (Women, Infants, and Children program) breastfeeding staff can help, as can other lactation support providers. Ask your healthcare provider for info on breastfeeding support in your area, and talk with others who have breastfed — mothers, grandmothers, sisters, friends — who can offer good information and assistance. Visit the Local Resource Directory on the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition website to find local breastfeeding help — <https://ksbreastfeeding.org/local-resources/>

Will breastfeeding cause my breasts to lose their shape? Your breasts may look different after you finish breastfeeding, but the change is due to more than just breastfeeding. Pregnancy, from very early on, causes breasts to grow and ligaments supporting the breasts to stretch. These changes take place anyway, whether or not a mom decides to breastfeed. Your breasts will probably return to their normal cup size once you stop breastfeeding. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says that age, gravity, and weight gain are all more likely to cause changes in a woman's breast size than breastfeeding.

Can I continue breastfeeding if I return to work or school? Yes! You will want to make a plan. Talk with your boss before you have the baby about your need for time to pump and a private space that is not a bathroom. Find a “breastfeeding-friendly” child care provider near your work or school. You can use a breast pump to collect milk and a “blue ice” cooler bag to store your milk

for your baby while you are at work. Plan to start to pump 1 to 2 weeks before you go back to work to get used to pumping. You will only need about 10 to 12 ounces of milk to take to child care on your first day back. For more tips about safely pumping and storing breast milk, see: <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3200.pdf>.

For more information about infant feeding and other topics, contact your local K-State Research and Extension office.

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Reviewed by Brenda Bandy, IBCLC, Co-executive Director, Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition, and by Kay Powell, RD, and Sarah Hoing, RD, Kansas WIC Program Shawnee County.

Figure 1. Newborn Tummy Size



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Feeding Our Youngest

Newborn to 1 month

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Welcome to one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs in the world — feeding your baby! Babies don't come with instruction manuals, and all parents have questions. Sometimes the answers — from many sources — can be confusing. Feeding patterns for infants have changed dramatically through the years, so the advice you receive about feeding may vary, too. In this series of newsletters, you will learn to:

- Understand your baby's needs.
- Read your baby's cues.
- Watch for new skills as your baby develops.
- Enjoy mealtime with your youngest.

A new baby will lead the way when it comes to sleeping and eating patterns. Your newborn will need to eat often — probably every 2 or 3 hours. His stomach is so small (Figure 1) that he will wake up frequently, ready to eat.

When should you feed your baby?

Watch for his cues — babies will do many things (before they cry) to tell you they are hungry. Look for these signs from your baby to show you he is ready to be fed:

- Keeps his hands near his mouth.
- Bends his arms and legs.
- Makes sucking noises.
- Puckers his lips.
- Searches for the nipple.

It will be more positive for your baby AND you if feeding begins when you see your baby give you one or more cues — don't wait for baby to cry! Also, crying won't always mean "I'm hungry!" Both you and baby will soon get used to reading each other's signals, but it can be hard — especially at first.

Figure 1. Newborn Tummy Size



Breastfeeding or Infant Formula Feeding?

Whichever method you choose, know your baby benefits from the closeness and comfort of feeding time. Always wash your hands before feeding your baby — you are keeping his meals safe.

Building Blocks: Breastfeeding is Your Baby's Best Food:



- Optimal nutrition for baby's growth and development.
- Convenient, ready, and the right temperature.
- Costs less than infant formula.
- Offers health benefits to baby, mom, family, and community.

Breast milk is easily digested so breastfeed whenever your baby seems hungry — sometimes as often as 10 to 12 times per day in the first month. This frequent nursing helps establish your milk supply. You will know your baby is getting enough to eat if he has 6 to 8 wet diapers and 3 stools per day. And remember — your baby is growing rapidly! You may notice that your baby seems hungrier at times and wants to eat more often. Most babies experience a growth spurt between ages 1 and 3 weeks, and another at age 6 to 8 weeks. Though it is a good sign, it can be a challenge to a weary mom. Just feed baby when you see the cues signaling he's getting hungry and know that growth spurts don't last long.

If human milk is unavailable, infants should be fed an iron-fortified commercial infant formula. Infant formulas are carefully designed to meet your baby's nutritional needs. If you decide to supplement breastfeeding with formula or formula-feed entirely, your healthcare provider will probably recommend an iron-fortified formula to prevent

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anemia. Always mix formula according to package directions, for your baby's health. Do not give your baby cow's milk or goat's milk — he is not able to digest them until he is about a year old.

If you feed your baby with a bottle, be sure to hold him so he can see your face as you feed him. Never prop your baby's bottle. Babies can easily gag or choke if the bottle is left in their mouths.

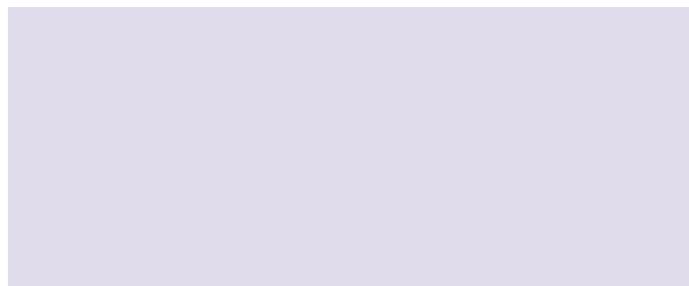
It is fine to give your baby breast milk or formula that is room temperature, or cool. If he prefers a warm bottle, heat the bottle in a pan of hot water or hold the bottle under hot running water. Never use the microwave to heat the bottle — this is very dangerous. The formula may become very hot when microwaved, even though the bottle seems cool. The hot liquid can burn your baby's tender mouth.

It's important to keep your baby's milk safe. Discard any breast milk or formula left in the bottle after a feeding. Bacteria from your baby's mouth can cause spoilage and make your baby sick. Here is more information about keeping breast milk safe:

ksre-learn.com/MF3200

Read more about keeping your baby's formula safe: <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/infant-formula-safety-dos-and-donts>

Remember, only breast milk or formula for your newborn. Your baby is perfectly nourished by breast milk or formula at this age — no need for water or solids yet. We'll talk about the introduction of solid foods later, when your baby is showing signs he is ready — nearer to 6 months of age.



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Feeding Our Youngest

2 Months

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By now, you and your baby are becoming successful in creating positive feeding times, whether you are breastfeeding, feeding formula, or combining the two.

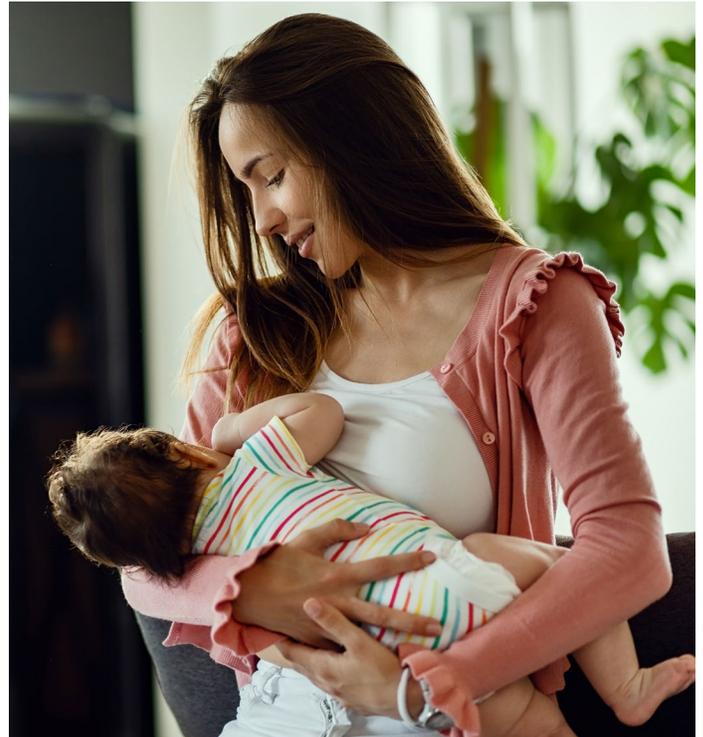
You are probably noticing smiles and cues from your baby, too, and those cues can help you become very good at the give-and-take process of infant feeding.

Your baby knows how much she needs to eat, and that amount will vary from day to day. A baby who has had enough cannot push away food, but she will give you cues to show she is full. When your baby has had enough, she may:

- Suck more slowly or stop sucking.
- Relax her hands and arms.
- Turn away from the nipple.
- Fall asleep.

The best feeding approach is one that is shared by you and your baby. Each of you has an important role in the process. As a parent, you are responsible for what to feed your baby. Your baby is responsible for how much to eat and how often. Helping your child become a confident, competent eater is an important task, and it starts early!

Not only does your baby know how much to eat, she also knows how often she needs to eat. Many parents attempt to get their baby on a schedule or to establish a routine. Just remember, your baby knows hunger or fullness, but not how to tell time! So it is your task to follow her lead and feed on her demand, not by the clock. Responding to a baby's hunger and fullness cues quickly — before she gets upset or anxious — helps your baby feel assured and comforted, and you are forming the foundation for good eating habits for the future.



Building Blocks: How Much?



- Baby will give hunger and fullness cues.
- Follow your baby's lead.
- Feed at baby's "request."

Right now, breast milk or formula will provide all the nutrition your baby needs for healthy development and growth. However, it is recommended that all breastfed infants — and formula-fed infants who drink less than 32 ounces of formula per day — get extra vitamin D beginning in the first 2 months after birth. Your baby's health care provider can recommend the proper type and amount of vitamin D supplement for your baby.

Some moms start back to work when their baby is 2 to 3 months old. This doesn't have to mean an end to

breastfeeding! Many worksites have special policies and spaces to support a breastfeeding mom and her infant. You may want to start now to plan for how to work and breastfeed. If you are breastfeeding your baby, you can use a breast pump to collect breast milk for the feedings you will miss. It is helpful to start to pump a week before you return to work to be sure you have a good supply.

When pumping your breast milk, it is important to handle your milk safely. Check out the chart below to be sure you and your caregiver know how to keep your baby safe. Breast milk may be frozen for later use. It is best to thaw breast milk in the refrigerator. Do not use a microwave oven to heat breast milk —

it may cause the loss of some of the beneficial properties of the milk.

Whether you use breast milk or formula when you go back to work, it is best to prepare the bottles ahead, or check with your caregiver to be sure your instructions are followed.

Next month, we'll talk about the importance of cuddling your baby at feeding time, and how baby will show you (in a few weeks) when she is ready to be introduced to solid foods.

For now, enjoy the wonder of feeding your youngest!

Human Milk Storage Guidelines

	STORAGE LOCATION AND TEMPERATURES		
Type of Breast Milk	Countertop 77°F (25°C) or colder (room temperature)	Refrigerator 40°F (4°C)	Freezer 0°F (-18°C) or colder
Freshly Expressed or Pumped	Up to 4 Hours	Up to 4 Days	Within 6 months is best. Up to 12 months is acceptable
Thawed, Previously Frozen	1-2 Hours	Up to 1 Day (24 hours)	NEVER refreeze human milk after it has been thawed
Leftover from a Feeding (baby did not finish the bottle)	Use within 2 hours after the baby is finished feeding		

Reference: https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm. Accessed Jan. 27, 2021.

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Feeding Our Youngest

3 Months

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You and your baby are quite a team by now. Most parents see a pattern or regularity to their baby's appetite and feedings by 3 months of age. But baby is still the one in charge of when and how often to eat. There will be times when she sleeps longer than usual and wakes up extra hungry. She may even need to eat twice in a short period of time, to make up for the extra calories she skipped while she slept. It is perfectly normal — but not always predictable.

Baby benefits from those close feedings, where the cuddling and conversation she receives with the feeding are so important to her development. She learns to be social and to associate food with positive feelings.

Remember that your baby needs to be fed by someone — you, a caregiver, brother or sister (with supervision) — and not just propped up with a bottle. Not only is this important to your baby socially, but proper positioning will help prevent pooling of milk that can lead to ear infections, choking, and over-feeding. Also, you can prevent tooth decay and protect your baby's beautiful smile by never putting baby to bed with a bottle.

You may have noticed that your baby sticks out his tongue when something touches his lips. This helps protect your baby from choking by adjusting your breast or bottle nipple in his mouth. It will also happen if your baby is given solid food too soon. This tongue thrust reflex is gradually lost by four to six months, and that's one sign baby will be ready to try solid food.



Related to the tongue thrust reflex, your baby also has a gag reflex to prevent choking. Babies may gag when something touches the back of their mouth, such as solid food offered too soon, or breast milk or formula that is flowing too fast. This reflex will become less sensitive as your baby grows and is another sign that he is ready for solid food — when small amounts are easily swallowed.

You may be thinking “How much should my baby be eating? Is she growing fast enough? Is she growing too fast?” These are questions that most parents wonder about, and the baby's doctor is thinking it, too. Your little one has been weighed and measured each time she has visited the health care provider.

While your baby's growth is important, it is also important to remember that each baby will grow at a different rate — a rate that is just right for them. An infant typically gains 4 to 8 ounces per week in the first 6 months and doubles her birth weight between 4 and 6 months.

Remember, it is always best to follow your baby's hunger cues, and at this age, your baby will likely want to eat at least six times per day.

Healthy infants go through several growth spurts during their first year — typically at 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months of age. It is possible that your baby may be going through one at this time. How do you handle a growth spurt? Follow your baby's lead — your baby will let you know when she is hungry. Continue to offer breast milk or formula as often as your baby demands it. If you are exclusively breastfeeding (no added formula, food or water), there is no reason to supplement with formula. Your baby will get more milk just by you offering the breast more often.

Building Blocks: Baby's Growth



- Each baby is different.
- Follow your baby's cues; appetite and growth will vary.

- Growth spurts are normal and a good sign!

By now, you may be thinking about solid foods for your baby, but it is not quite time yet. Sometimes well-meaning friends and family may suggest cereal in the bottle to help your baby sleep through the night. It's not recommended for a number of reasons:

- Baby isn't ready to digest food other than breast milk or formula.
- Baby may choke.
- Baby's tummy is still small so he will need to wake up and eat.

Most babies are ready to begin solid foods — typically, infant cereal — at around 6 months. By age 6 months, your baby will have developed enough to be able to swallow and digest very soft solids, sit with support, and hold her head steady. So, it won't be long! Watch for these signs from your baby, but for now, your baby is perfectly nourished with breast milk or formula.

Next month, we will talk about solid foods baby will soon be ready for, how to know that she is ready and steps you can take to start offering her new food.

Enjoy the beauty of feeding your youngest!

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Feeding Our Youngest

4 Months

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Your baby is growing and changing — and these changes tell us it will soon be time to begin some gradual changes in her diet. Although there are no hard and fast rules about when to add solid foods to baby's diet, a gradual start, beginning around age 6 months, is recommended. It is best to let your baby take the lead.

For now, your baby is getting all the nutrition he or she needs from breast milk (or infant formula). You may wonder “How will I know when it is time for my baby to start solid food?” It is better for your baby to wait to start solid foods until she is ready for them. Look for these signs of readiness:

- Sits up with support.
- Holds head steady.
- Opens mouth for spoon.
- Keeps most food in her mouth and swallows.

At age 4 to 5 months, your baby's mouth is developing beyond just sucking — she now is beginning a swallowing pattern. This will help her move food to the back of the tongue and swallow without choking. So very soon will be the right time to gradually introduce first solid foods, such as infant cereal, to baby's diet. Talk to your doctor before starting your baby on solid foods.



Building Blocks: Will solid foods help my baby sleep through the night?



This question is the reason many parents first think about introducing solid foods to their baby. But the answer is no — it is not solid food, but your baby's growth and development that will gradually allow her to sleep for longer stretches. Often these two milestones occur at about the same time, but adding solid food doesn't help baby to sleep longer.

Research shows that sleeping through the night is associated with mental development, not a full tummy. Infants 2 to 12 months sleep

13 to 14 hours per day — but not all at once. Your 4-month-old is developing a more regular sleeping pattern but expect her to wake 2 to 3 times at night to eat. These nighttime feedings of breast milk (or infant formula) are important for your baby's growth and development.

Thinking about new foods and allergies

You may be concerned about allergic reactions when your baby starts solid food. Current research says there is no need to delay possible allergenic foods when your baby is ready for solids. New studies have shown that waiting to start potentially allergenic foods may, in fact, set your baby up for allergies. Visit with your health-care provider or WIC (Women, Infants and Children) clinic for more information about the new feeding guidelines.

Enjoy the ease of feeding your youngest!



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Feeding Our Youngest

5 Months

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It's an exciting time for your baby and you! As your baby grows and develops, his feeding skills are developing, too. He is very skilled with breastfeeding or bottle feeding at this point but is probably showing increasing interest in your meals and the food you eat. Change will be the key for the next few months, as your baby learns about food and begins building lifelong healthy eating skills. Here is what you can expect as you support your baby through the changes to come.

Expect change, not routine

By waiting to start solid foods until your baby is ready, the progression to table food by age 10 months or so should be fairly smooth and ever-changing. You will find that your baby works hard to master these new skills — and, with your help, will advance with confidence. So, let's talk about next steps!

What do we need to get started?

A small, bowlled (rounded part) spoon with a long handle will help you steer small amounts of food toward your baby's mouth — and he will do his part to see the spoon, open his mouth, close his lips around the food, swallow the bite, and get ready for more.

Why is iron-fortified infant cereal, introduced at age 6 months, a good first solid food?

Infant cereal can be mixed with breast milk or formula, giving it a familiar flavor. You will make it thin and smooth to begin with so that it's easy for baby to swallow. As baby gets used to this solid food, you will gradually increase the thick-



ness and lumpiness of the cereal to help baby learn to accept new textures.

Another reason to offer infant cereals is that they are iron-fortified. Iron is essential to your baby's growth and development. Babies are born with iron stored in their bodies, and both breast milk and most formulas are good sources of iron. But your baby is growing rapidly, so these iron stores are used up by age 6 months or so. At this age, babies need extra iron from solid food sources to prevent anemia.

Building blocks: Iron

Who's at Risk for Iron-deficiency Anemia (or Low Iron)?

- Premature babies born more than 3 weeks early
- Breastfed babies not given iron rich foods after 6 months



- Babies who drink formula that is not iron fortified
- Babies who drink cow's or goat's milk before age 12 months

Having low iron levels may affect your baby's:

- Learning ability
- Social, emotional health
- Mental development
- Scores on motor skills tests

What about baby led weaning?

Baby Led Weaning is a recent trend in infant feeding that allows babies to self-feed finger foods when solids are first offered. This practice skips over some important skill building each baby needs for proper swallowing and oral development. We encourage following your baby's abilities and starting with pureed and mashed foods that are easy to swallow. We will talk more about advancing the texture of your baby's diet in later months.

For more information about Baby Led Weaning, see

<https://www.elynsatterinstitute.org/family-meals-focus/78-baby-led-weaning/>

Steps to introducing solids

Your baby is almost ready, and you are, too! Here's what you will need to know:

- Offer single ingredient foods to be sure baby tolerates each new food well.
- Feed solid foods from a spoon, not a bottle.
- Slowly increase the thickness of the cereal, to help your baby build chewing skills.
- Start with one solid food feeding a day, and increase to two, for a daily total of 1/3 to 1/2 cup.
- Be ready to advance baby's diet as she develops.

What about water?

Babies who are only breastfeeding or bottle feeding don't need extra water, as breast milk and formula provide all the fluid a baby needs. As solid foods are introduced, you can offer a small amount of water from a cup.

See next month for more about introducing your baby to a cup and increasing the variety of foods you offer.

Enjoy baby's enthusiasm while feeding your youngest!

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Feeding Our Youngest

6 Months

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Big things are around the corner for you and your youngest, and it's time to consider next steps in feeding!

By now your baby and you are probably ready to explore solid foods. Your baby is developing in many ways that signal she is ready — for example, she is sitting up with support and shows she wants food by opening her mouth. Introducing your baby to the world of solid foods at the right time in her development helps her shape new food and feeding habits while establishing healthy eating patterns.

So, how do you begin feeding solid foods to your baby? One food at a time! It is important that your baby is introduced to single-ingredient foods one at a time, and that you watch his response to the food. Try out each food for 3 to 5 days and check for any reactions like

- Stomach aches
- Diarrhea
- Rashes
- Wheezing

Then go on to the next food, working to widen the foods your baby accepts.

After your baby is comfortable with iron-fortified baby cereal, you will want to introduce other complementary foods such as mashed vegetables and fruits, pureed meats, mashed hard-cooked eggs and beans, and plain yogurt. In the beginning, the texture will need to be smooth and lump-free, but soon baby will be ready for more texture. Avoid giving your baby any foods that have added salt or sugar. New foods will be flavorful to baby so no need for added salt or added sugar.



What if baby dislikes a new food? Take “no” for an answer for a while and offer it again later. It may take several introductions of a new food for your baby to accept it.

Not only do you want to slowly introduce the number of foods your baby eats, you will also want to slowly increase the amount and texture of solid foods in your baby's diet as well. Start with one feeding daily, by giving your baby 1 to 2 tablespoons of pureed foods, then gradually increase feedings and amount of solid food over time. You may notice that once baby starts eating more solid foods, he will take less breast milk or formula. For the first year, breast milk or formula still should be the main source of nutrition for baby.

As you feed, watch for signs your baby is full:

- Turns head away from spoon.
- Keeps mouth closed.
- Loses interest in food and feeding.

Food safety continues to be important when feeding your youngest, whether you prepare your own baby food or use store-bought baby food. Wash your hands before feeding and use a clean spoon to put small amounts of food from the jar or container into a clean feeding dish. Feeding directly from the jar or container and saving the leftovers can introduce germs into your baby's food and make her sick.

Is your baby “helping” with feedings? Although this is a good sign, it can make feeding a challenge, and messy! This suggestion may help. Use two spoons — one for you to feed with and one for baby to hold. This will help baby practice her skills but expect some food to end up on your baby's face, hands, bib, or beyond. Children learn a lot about food from touching, exploring, and tossing their food. Their food play is an important part of their development and helps them accept new foods and textures.

You and your baby are slowly and steadily working toward the goal of accepting the same foods that the whole family enjoys together!

Building blocks: Baby's cup



The training (sippy or tippy) cup is a training tool to help your baby transition from the nipple to a regular cup.

- Choose a cup that is lightweight and easy for tiny hands to handle when your baby is ready to hold it.
- Choose cup with few parts so they can be cleaned and sanitized easily.
- Avoid cups with valves because baby will have to suck like drinking from a bottle and

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More about baby led weaning

The name is confusing because babies *are not* being weaned from breast milk or formula. They will still get most of their nutrition from breast milk (or infant formula) for their first year of life.

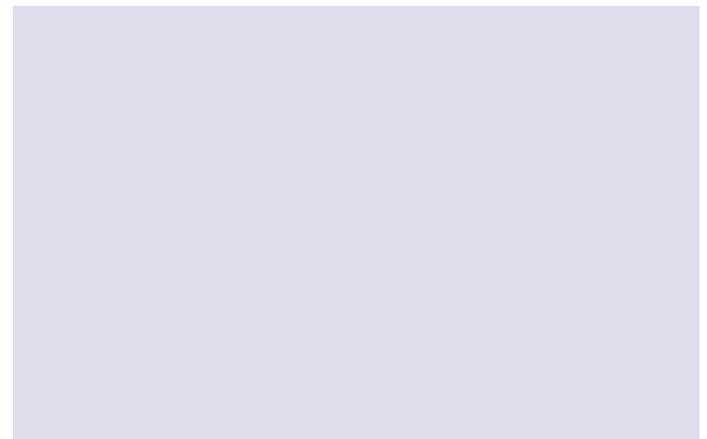
Slowly introducing new foods, tastes, and textures helps your baby develop the skills and confidence to try and accept family foods and become a competent eater.

will not learn how to sip or drink from the cup.

- Offer a cup with breast milk (or formula) and water at mealtimes.
- Offer a cup with water during snack time or in between feedings.
- Wait to offer fruit juice until after your baby turns a year old.

Next month, in month seven, we discuss more things to think about as you add variety to your baby's meals and snacks.

Enjoy the new challenges of feeding your youngest!



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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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Feeding Our Youngest

8 Months

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Last month, we talked about your baby's changing abilities and a gradual increase in food texture and variety. As your baby moves toward eating family-friendly table food — somewhere between 7 and 10 months — you will want to continue to increase the variety and textures of food you offer.

As mentioned in our 4-month newsletter, the allergy advice for feeding infants has changed. Recent research supports introducing a wide variety of solids when your baby is ready for them. Waiting longer or avoiding some foods until baby is a year old, such as eggs, fish, and wheat, does not seem to prevent food allergies. In fact, it may set baby up for allergies later on because new foods help baby's immune system develop. So, introduce a variety of foods during this time of growth and adjustment, and continue to watch your baby for any reactions or signs of intolerance as we talked about in month 6.

Introducing meat can be a challenge, because your baby may have few teeth, and baby teeth aren't the ones that can handle certain types of meat. In addition, baby's mouth and jaw muscles will need to grow, develop, and practice chewing these new textures. So, think about the types of meats that you offer. Ground meats and tender poultry won't pose a problem because they can be finely chopped. Tougher meats may need to be ground or cut up into very tiny pieces. After grinding or cutting, adding a little moisture to the meat — such as breast milk, formula, or even a favorite vegetable — will also help your baby's chewing and swallowing success.



Continue to advance the texture of your baby's food as her skills advance. Use a fork or potato masher to remove large lumps. Although it will be messy in the beginning, your baby will enjoy feeding herself small pieces of a variety of foods. As her abilities grow, she will be able to pick up foods with her fingers instead of palm-grasping them. Mealtime will become neater as she further develops those self-feeding skills.

When your baby tries new foods, she may occasionally gag as she chews and swallows. Gagging is a safety reflex that prevents choking and is caused when a baby puts too much food in their mouth or if a food is too far back in their mouth. Unlike adults, a 7- to 9-month-old baby's gag reflex is situated around the middle of the tongue, so it is expected that they will gag at some point when they start to try solid foods. Gagging is a protective response that helps baby learn about texture and bite size.

Gagging is not the same as choking. Watch your baby closely to see if she is simply gagging, and able to move air and food around, or if she is truly choking and cannot breathe.

Building Block: Feeding and Health Safety Tips



- How to prevent choking:
 - Ensure your baby is always sitting upright during feedings.
 - Make sure the food presented is in the proper shape, size, and texture for the baby.
 - Cut food into long strips they can grab in their fists.
 - Never leave your baby alone with food.
- Avoid foods that can cause choking such as corn, nuts, popcorn, raw carrots, seeds, grapes, or hot dogs. Dice or chop larger chunks of food into smaller pieces.
- Serve baby's food unseasoned — no need for added salt or sugar.
- Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages, caffeine-containing drinks, and herbal teas.



- Avoid processed meats, fried foods, and snack foods like potato chips.
- Don't give baby honey until after a year old, because honey can contain botulism and young infants may become very sick from it.
- Avoid serving foods that are too hot for baby. It's okay to serve foods cold — most babies don't mind.

Next month, we will talk about the importance of finger foods.

Change is the key when feeding your youngest!

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MF3578 August 2021

Feeding Our Youngest

9 Months

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By now, your baby has developed a long way toward feeding himself. Ideally, his meals are with the rest of the family, and he is helping you (or you are assisting him?) with his feeding. At age 9 months, your baby is developing a more precise grip — he can pick up items with his thumb and forefinger now. Think of the many finger foods you might offer.

One note about variety. Your baby is an individual and may have likes and dislikes you do not have. Be sure to offer her a wide variety of foods — even ones you may not like. She is at the age to form opinions about food, but right now, when food is an adventure, she is especially open to discovery!

This month you should continue to advance the texture and variety of your baby's diet. Remember, one goal of feeding your youngest is to continuously evaluate his abilities and readiness, and to move toward the ultimate — table food!

Some babies are ready sooner than others, and some babies have more spirit of adventure and discovery and may be more open to the change to solid foods. As we have said before, the most successful caregivers are those who follow baby's lead.

Babies vary in how they view bottle or breast-feeding at this point. Some babies really want and need the closeness of the bottle/breastfeedings, and it is comforting to them to continue. Others are so curious and independent that they seem almost insulted by the calming routine. Your baby may be somewhere in between. Just follow



baby's lead and adjust the amount of solids and liquids you offer at meals and snacks. By now, if your baby is eating solids — table foods especially — you may want to offer the breast or formula feeding after the meal, to encourage baby's move toward a more solid diet.

Speaking of snacks, your baby will probably do well with in-between meal feedings, because she still doesn't have a big enough tummy to go straight from one meal to the next without "refueling." This way, baby can manage to eat with the family, without becoming too hungry between meals.

Building Blocks: Finger Foods

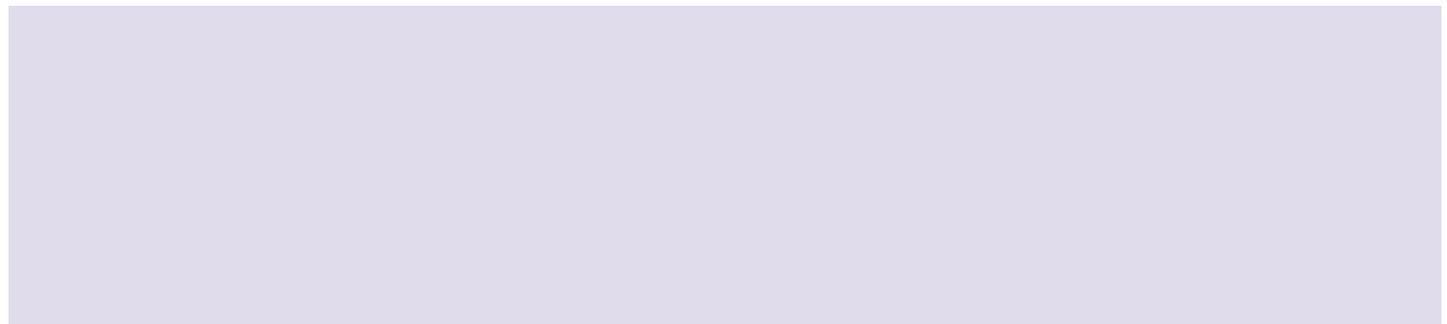


- Small pieces of soft cheese
- Cooked vegetable pieces — sweet potato, carrot, peas, beans, zucchini

- Wafer-type crackers and Cheerio type cereal pieces
- Well-cooked pasta
- Scrambled egg
- Peeled, soft fruit pieces or slices
- Ripe avocado
- Soft, tender small pieces of cooked meat, chicken, and fish

Look how far you both have come in nine quick months. Relax — you and your youngest (the real expert in this) can savor the flavor of successful feeding!

Next month we will talk about your baby's increasing abilities with a spoon!



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Feeding Our Youngest

10 Months

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Last month, we talked about finger foods — a great way for your child to learn about the texture and tastes of new foods, build those self-feeding skills, and experience the satisfaction of moving food into her own mouth! Finger foods are an important and practical step in baby’s development, but spoon feeding is another valuable skill she is learning.

We mentioned back in month six that your baby might accept feeding better if she had a spoon to “work with.” By now, she is probably trying hard to spoon food to her mouth — and this may be trying your patience. Take comfort in the fact that most babies don’t become really good with a spoon until after their first birthday, and you are helping her improve her motor skills. You will probably become skilled at “taking turns” with your baby — she will feed herself a spoonful, and if she isn’t too independent, she may let you offer a spoonful too.

If you haven’t already, have your child join the rest of the family at the table. At this age they enjoy being part of family mealtime. When offering foods from the table, make sure they are nutritious, small enough for baby to pick up, and soft enough for baby to chew. A healthy plate contains fruits, vegetables, protein (tender meat, poultry, fish, or legumes), and grains (fortified cereal, pasta, or bread).

While it is important that your baby has soft, moist food as she works to master table food, be sure any protein food is thoroughly cooked. Cook



meats, poultry, and eggs until well done, because babies are particularly likely to become ill from eating undercooked protein foods.

Continue to offer a variety of new foods and textures to your child — you’re helping her become a capable, competent eater for life. While you are working to advance your baby’s diet, remember that she is working hard to master these new skills. Take a moment to praise those efforts — even if the process gets messy at times.

Building Blocks: Praise the Progress



- Be patient! The mess is actually progress.
- Expect baby’s tastes to change. If a food is refused, offer it a few days later.
- Show baby what you want her to learn. Use a cup or spoon and enjoy food!

- Expect cup drinking to be “leaky” — especially at first.
- Praise your youngest for even small successes!

Have you noticed how we’ve gone back and forth between “baby” and “child” in this month’s newsletter? It fits, doesn’t it? Your baby is moving toward the toddler stage and is gradually leaving behind many of the baby feeding and developmental traits he had. At the same time, he may try a new skill, then resort to familiar methods. Your patience, support, and good humor will help your child move smoothly into toddlerhood.

Next month, we’ll talk about weaning.

Until then, best wishes in the feeding of your youngest!



Reference

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/people-at-risk/children-under-five>

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MF3580 August 2021

Feeding Our Youngest

11 Months

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Last month we talked about how your baby is moving toward becoming more independent with wanting to feed himself with a spoon and eat finger foods. He may seem more like a young toddler than a baby in his eating patterns, and this will present new challenges to you, the parent. With a little slicing, chopping, and mashing, table food can make up most of your child's diet by now. He is probably drinking breast milk or formula from a cup with meals, and demanding to join in at family meals, if he is not already included.

When your child eats table food and has started drinking from a cup, he is on his way to weaning, but keep in mind that there are no rules about a "right time" to wean — it's up to baby and mom. Weaning from bottle or breastfeeding is a gradual process and varies in length of time from one child to the next. Again, be sure to follow your child's lead — as her interest in table food and the cup grows, she may lose interest in bottle or breastfeeding, at least at mealtime. Breastfeeding or bottle-feeding may still be baby's choice for between-meal snacks and for late-night and early morning feedings.

One sure sign of your baby's growing up is an increased independence. Your baby will want to feed himself and may resist your efforts to "help." This is not a neat, clean time in your child's feeding experiences, but that is expected and needed for his development. He will learn that meals are pleasant, food tastes good, and that he is a pretty smart person for being able to feed himself. He doesn't know about messy



and naughty habits yet — those are our views of events. So, remind yourself that this stage will pass, prepare an area that is cleanable afterwards, and joining your child for a pleasant meal. Your child will repay your attentiveness to his "requests" by becoming a more reasonable, agreeable toddler.

It is time for a reminder about nutrition. Your baby still is fairly young, and only can hold a small amount of food and liquid at a time, so be sure that food and drink is healthy and nutritious! Sometimes parents or relatives think it is cute to offer baby soda pop, french fries, candy, or rich desserts. Babies are even more attracted to sweets, salt, and sugar than adults are, and their strong liking of sweet, "empty calorie" foods — foods that add calories, but not much else in the way of nutrition — will develop quickly if they are introduced to these foods. So, resist the urge to offer these foods to your child. There will be

plenty of time later for her to discover them. Right now, offer nutritious meals, snacks, and drinks. Fruit, vegetables, grains, and protein foods will taste special to your baby, and you will be doing her (and her teeth) a great favor.

Building Blocks: Thinking about weaning?



- Babies should have breast milk or formula until 1 year of age. However, by age 1 year, babies should be drinking from a cup and not the bottle.
- The decision to stop breastfeeding is an individual matter for mother and baby, so breastfeeding can continue as long as mom and baby want.
- When you are ready to wean from the bottle:
 - Gradually decrease the number of times your child gets a bottle each day.
 - Be consistent. For example, if you have stopped giving your child a bottle at noon, do not “give in” on a bad day.



- Give a fussy baby extra attention (and a drink from a cup) instead of a bottle.
- Do not begin weaning when your child is sick or upset.

Next month we will be looking forward to your baby turning a year old. We will talk about a healthful eating pattern for toddlers as well as child-sized portions.

Enjoy the interaction of feeding your youngest!

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MF3581 August 2021

Feeding Our Youngest

12 Months

K-STATE
Research and Extension

What an exciting time for your baby and you. As your baby approaches his first birthday, he is learning and mastering many skills and abilities. In many ways, he closely resembles an older child. Though he is moving in that direction, we want to talk about some unique needs of the 12-month-old.

For starters, a healthful eating pattern should include a variety of foods that are rich in calcium, vitamins A, C, and D, and iron. This variety of foods will provide the vitamins and minerals your child needs to thrive.

Building Blocks: Foods high in...



Vitamin C	Vitamin A	Iron
Apricots	Broccoli	Animal sources: beef, pork, lamb, veal
Broccoli	Carrots	Chicken/turkey, especially dark meat poultry
Cantaloupe	Pumpkin	Plant sources: dark green leafy vegetables
Grapefruit	Mixed Vegetables	Iron-fortified cereal
Oranges	Spinach	Beans, legumes, lentils, tofu
Spinach	Yellow Squash	Strawberries

Pairing iron-rich foods with foods high in vitamin C helps your baby absorb iron better.

Another question that may come up about this time is “what should my baby be drinking?” Pedi-



atricians and health-care professionals encourage parents to continue breast milk or infant formula until at least 1 year of age. At age 12 months, your baby is probably ready for cow’s milk, and it needs to be **whole** milk. Why is whole milk important? The fat in whole milk is essential to the proper development of your baby’s nervous system. Your baby doesn’t get much fat yet from other foods in her diet, and fat is needed for good health. Unless her pediatrician says otherwise, you will want to continue whole milk until your child is 2 years old. After that, a lower fat milk will be a good choice. Whole milk is also a great source of calcium, vitamin D, and protein.

You might notice that your child’s appetite may not be as big as it was at age 8 to 9 months, or you may see that your child is hungrier at meal and snack times than before. Babies have growth spurts and will be hungry for fuel to support their growth. Your baby may be walking by now,

or crawling rapidly from here to there. All that exercise needs fuel. So how much do you feed your baby?

Here is a sample daily meal pattern for your 12-month-old:

<p>What is in a Breakfast?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk (4 fl oz or ½ cup) • Vegetables, Fruit, or Both (¼ cup) • Grains (½ oz eq) • Sometimes we serve a meat/meat alternate (such as eggs, yogurt, or other foods) in place of the grains at breakfast.
<p>What is in a Lunch or Supper?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk (4 fl oz or ½ cup) • Meats/Meat Alternates (1 oz eq) • Vegetables (⅓ cup) • Fruit (⅓ cup) • Grains (½ oz eq)
<p>What is in a Snack? We Pick 2:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk (4 fl oz or ½ cup) • Meats/Meat Alternates (½ oz eq) • Vegetables (½ cup) • Fruit (½ cup) • Grains (½ oz eq)

fl oz = fluid ounces; oz = ounces; oz eq = ounce equivalent

Ounce equivalents are a way to measure amounts of food. What counts as an ounce-equivalent (oz-equiv) of grains? In general, 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal can be considered as 1 ounce-equivalent from the Grains Group.

Let this serve as a guideline — not every day will fit perfectly into this pattern, but the amounts and variety outlined here are important for baby’s growth and health.

Happy mealtimes, and best wishes for feeding your youngest!

For More Information

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/Mealtimes_with_Toddlers_Family_Handout.pdf

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