# Infant Nutrition

## 6 to 12 months

# Hello!

My name is _____

I weigh _____ pounds and _____ ounces.

I am _____ inches long.

A special note for me _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____.

# Am I ready to eat solid foods?

I am usually ready to begin eating solid foods when I am 6 months old. I may be ready for solid foods when I can:

- Sit up alone with little support.
- Hold my head steady and straight.
- Open my mouth when I see food coming.
- Keep my tongue low and flat to receive the spoon.
- Keep food in my mouth now instead of pushing it back out with my tongue.
- Grasp small objects, such as toys or food.

# Introducing Me to Solid Foods

Introducing me to solid foods will be an adventure for both of us!

- Continue to feed me breast milk and/or formula until I am at least 1 year old.
- It may be easier for me to start with foods that are mashed, pureed, or strained and very soft and smooth in texture. I'll want to try a greater variety of textures as I learn to eat solids!
- Let me use my hands to eat or feed me with a spoon. This helps me with my development.
- If I cry or turn away from food, I may not be hungry.
- Only put breast milk or formula in my bottle. I do not need cereal or other solid foods added; this may lead to me choking.
- Introduce me to foods from all the food groups and limit foods with added sugar or salt.
- Feed me foods with iron and zinc, such as baby food made with meat, mashed beans, eggs, or iron-fortified cereals.

# Food Allergies

**Feeding me safely will help prevent me from getting sick.**

- Introduce me to potentially allergenic foods at the same time as other foods.
- I may be allergic to a food if I develop a rash, breathing issues, sneezing, congestion, wheezing, tight throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, pale skin, or confusion after eating a new food.
- Please contact a healthcare provider immediately if I have any of these symptoms.

Potentially Allergenic Foods: peanuts, egg, cow's milk, tree nuts, shellfish, fish, sesame and soy.

Talk to your pediatrician about introducing potentially allergenic food to infants with eczema, food allergy, or family history of food allergy.

# Give Me Safe Food

- Make sure that jars of infant food are clean, intact, and not dented.
- Store infant foods in the refrigerator after opening and use within 48 hours. Infant jarred meats should be used within 24 hours.
- Put my food in a dish to serve rather than serving me from the jar. That way if I do not finish the entire jar of food, it can be put in the fridge so I can eat it later.
- Do not give me any unpasteurized foods or beverages, or deli meats if they are not heated, as they could contain harmful bacteria.

**No Honey Until I Am 1 Year Old**
Infants should not be given any foods containing raw or cooked honey. Honey can contain the Clostridium botulinum organism that could cause serious illness or death among infants.

**Choking:**

- Make sure that I am sitting in a highchair or other safe, supervised place at meal time.
- Offer foods in the appropriate size, consistency, and shape that will allow me to eat and swallow easily.
- Foods such as hot dogs, sausages, large chunks of meat or cheese, candy, nuts and seeds, raw carrots, grapes, popcorn, chips, and chunks of peanut butter are choking hazards.

# Finger Foods Are Fun!

When I am about 8 or 9 months, I will be able to pick up food using my thumb and pointer finger. Be sure that I can chew and swallow soft foods before introducing finger foods.

Finger foods should be cut into pea size bites to prevent choking. Vegetables should be served cooked so that they are soft.

**Finger Food Ideas:**

- **Fruits:** watermelon, banana, avocado, peaches, strawberries, quartered blueberries, cantaloupe
- **Cooked Vegetables:** broccoli, green beans, sweet potato, carrots, peas, squash
- **Proteins:** tiny pieces of ground meat, shredded chicken, tuna fish or flaked fish, mashed beans, shredded cheese, tofu

# Mealtime & Snack Time!

- Feed me meals and snacks around the same time each day.
- Serve me a variety of foods.
- Let me play with utensils while you are feeding me or while I am eating. I will learn to use them this way!
- Watch for cues that I am full. I will turn my head away, refuse the spoon, or keep my mouth closed.
- Let me sit and eat with the family. I learn from watching you!

# What About Drinks?

## Water

- I get most of the water that I need from breast milk, formula, or both.
- Offer me 4 to 8 ounces of water throughout the day when you begin to feed me solid foods. Increase the amount provided as I approach 1 year of age.
- Serve me water in a cup rather than a bottle to allow me to practice using it. This is good for my development.

## Juice

- Babies younger than 12 months should not be given juice.

## My First Cup

Offer a cup around 6 months of age to foster independent feeding and to benefit speech and development. Put breast milk, formula, or water in the cup.

The best cup for me is one that:

- Has a spill proof valve,
- Is completely open or has a lid that is either snap-on or screw-on, or
- Has a flexible straw without a valve.

## References


1. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf

2. https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/infantandtoddlernutrition/foods-and-drinks/when-to-introduce-solid-foods.html#:~:text=Mix%20cereals%20and%20mashed%20cooked,be%20easily%20mashed%20or%20pureed.

3. https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/Infant_Feeding_Food_Safety_Job_Aid.pdf

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