At 6 months your baby is able to:

- Roll over both ways
- Support the upper body and head well while on his or her stomach
- Sit with support at 6 months and without support by 7–8 months
- Hold smaller objects in his or her hands
- Track well with his or her eyes
- Begin making munching movements as jaw and tongue movements are more coordinated

Feeding Tips

- Continue breastfeeding on demand until your baby is at least 1 year of age.
- Introduce strained meats (stage 1 chicken, lamb, turkey, beef, and veal) 2–4 tablespoons per day. Then introduce stage 2 meat/vegetable combinations or prepare your own combinations of meats and vegetables at home, as long as your baby has tried each part separately.
- Other protein foods that can be added to your baby’s diet include cooked and mashed beans, yogurt, cottage cheese, tofu, and egg yolk.
- Start with teaspoon-size servings and increase gradually to 1–2 tablespoon-size servings.
- Introduce and encourage the use of a cup.
- You may give diluted fruit juices. Limit juice to only 4 ounces daily. Give juice in a cup to prevent tooth decay.
  - Avoid desserts and sweets. The extra fat and sugar add unnecessary calories to your baby’s diet.
  - Your baby will now take 3–4 breast milk or iron-fortified formula feedings of 6 ounces for a total of 18–24 ounces.
  - Solid foods will now make up about 30 percent (one-third) of your baby’s total daily dietary intake.
At 9–12 months, your baby is able to:
- Sit up straight in a high chair
- Grasp food with hands or fingertips
- Move food from hands to mouth
- Drink from a cup
- Feed him- or herself with fingers
- Crawl and pull up to stand
- Use gums and tongue to mash “lumpy” food

Sample menu for a 9-12 month infant:

**Breakfast**
- Infant cereal 4 tbsp.
- Diced or mashed bananas 2 tbsp.

**Lunch**
- Diced turkey 2 tbsp.
- Peas 2 tbsp.
- Cooked pasta 1 tbsp.

**Dinner**
- Diced chicken 2 tbsp.
- Mashed potatoes 2 tbsp.
- Diced peaches 2 tbsp.

Breast milk or formula (6 oz.) three times a day

Feeding Tips
- Give your baby three meals a day and two nutritious snacks in addition to three breast milk or iron-fortified formula feedings (6–8 ounces each) with meals.

- Offer a variety of blended or mashed “lumpy” foods, such as stage 3 and junior “graduate” food and table food with a chunkier texture.

Examples:
- soft fruit wedges or slices
- soft cooked vegetable slices
- diced fruits and vegetables
- toast strips or bread
- mashed potatoes
- crackers
- pasta
- dry, unsweetened cereal such as Cheerios
- small, tender bits of meat (poultry)
- grated or soft cheese wedges
- beans and peas
- cottage cheese
- rice
- yogurt

- Begin to introduce bite-size finger food to encourage self-feeding.

- Continue breastfeeding or give iron-fortified formula until 12 months of age, then begin using whole milk (homogenized vitamin D).

- Give food that is appealing to your baby, such as finger food, food that crunches or crackles, foods that differ in texture, and food with different flavors and colors.

- Your baby may try a new food if it is prepared in an attractive manner.

  - A favorite or familiar food served with a new food may encourage acceptance of different foods.

  - Give foods high in iron, such as red meat, poultry, iron-enriched cereals, beans of all types, egg yolks, sweet potatoes, and spinach, to prevent anemia.
Encourage healthy eating habits:

- Do not use food as a reward for good behavior. Use praise, hugs, kisses, and other nonfood rewards.
- Do not force feedings. Do not overfeed. Be alert to your baby’s cues of being full.
- Offer a variety of foods. Try a new food along with a familiar food. Do not worry if a food is rejected the first time.
- Do not offer your baby food every time he or she cries or as a way to distract and keep him or her occupied. Comfort or cuddle your baby, read, or play with him or her instead.
- Offer your baby a variety of fruits and vegetables. Infants who have early eating experiences with a variety of fruits and vegetables are more likely to eat them later when they begin making their own choices.
- Limit sweets.
- Follow a daily meal routine.
  - Avoid the “clean plate syndrome.” Forcing your child to eat all the food on his or her plate even when he or she is not hungry is not a good habit. It teaches your child to eat just because the food is there, not because he or she is hungry.
- An overweight baby is not a healthy baby. Studies have shown that obesity in childhood dramatically increases the odds of obesity in adulthood.

Feeding Safety

- Avoid giving your baby hard foods such as nuts, raw carrots, celery, popcorn, chips, or hard candies that may cause choking.
- Avoid egg whites, honey, and cow’s milk until the age of one year.
- Citrus, strawberries, peanut butter, and fish are more likely to cause allergies than other solids and should be introduced with caution at one year of age or later.
- If peanut butter is offered, spread it thinly. In a large amount, peanut butter can possibly be a choking hazard.
- Always stay with your baby while he or she is eating to watch for choking hazards.
- Never sweeten foods with honey in the first year because of the risk of botulism.
- Expect a smaller and pickier appetite as your baby’s growth rate slows around one year of age.
An active baby is a healthy baby!

Play with your baby. Let him or her play with soft balls, mobiles, and soft blocks.

Don’t limit your baby in a playpen. Create safe areas for your baby to roll, crawl, or walk.

Let your baby reach for a musical mobile above the crib and for toys that are a little out of reach.

Give your baby “tummy time,” so that the neck and chest muscles develop.

Do not use a walker.

Most of all, have fun with your baby!