



Feeding Your Baby

“Getting my baby to try new foods isn’t easy. I’ve found that if I serve small amounts of the new food over and over, he’ll eventually try it.”

—Kaiser Permanente mom

Let your baby lead

Whether your baby drinks breast milk, formula, or both, it’s important to watch for cues that they’re hungry and full.

- Look for signs. Babies let you know when they want more and when they’re done by closing their mouth and turning away.
- Don’t try to force your baby to finish a bottle or empty both breasts. The amount they eat can change from day to day.

When to start solids

It’s important to only feed breast milk or formula until your baby is at least 4 months old. Offering anything else too soon can be dangerous.

Is my baby ready?

Most babies are ready for solid food when they:

- Are 4 to 7 months old.
- Can sit up well and have good head/neck control.
- Are interested: watch you eat, reach for food, open their mouth.

Foods to offer

When your baby’s ready, you can safely introduce these foods in any order.

- Pureed vegetables and fruits. (Even if your baby doesn’t like a food at first, keep offering.) While sweet fruits and vegetables like bananas and sweet potatoes are fine, you can also give broccoli or carrots.
- Finely ground meat or beans (these are good sources of iron).

- Infant oatmeal, or another whole-grain infant cereal, mixed with breast milk or formula.
- Whole-milk yogurt; cottage cheese.
- Shredded cheese.

Baby is sweet enough

Teach your baby to like unsweetened foods.

- Don’t give juice or other sweet drinks.
- Avoid foods with added sugars.
- Offer plain mashed fruit. Babies don’t need baby desserts.

About food allergies

We used to recommend waiting to introduce some foods until babies were older. New research shows we can help prevent some food allergies by giving a variety of foods in small amounts sooner—around ages 4 to 6 months.

How to introduce foods safely:

- Give new foods one at a time at home, just in case your baby has a reaction.
- Start with a very small amount. If there’s no reaction after 10 minutes, continue to give the food regularly (2 to 3 times per week).
- Wait 2 to 3 days before giving the next new food. This gives your baby time to adjust. If your baby does have a reaction, it’s easier to know which food may have caused it.

Special note about peanut products

If your baby has a serious eczema or egg allergy, talk with your child’s doctor before introducing peanut products.

Signs that your baby may be allergic to a food include:

- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Breathing problems
- Skin rash or hives

Safety tips

- Feed with a small rubber-tipped spoon.
- Don’t feed right from the jar or pouch:
 - Put a small amount on a clean dish. After baby is done, throw away anything that’s left. (Baby’s saliva can spoil leftovers.)
 - Refrigerate any food left in the original container for no more than 2 days.
- Don’t put pacifiers or baby utensils in your mouth. This increases your baby’s risk for infections and cavities.
- Learn what to do if your baby is choking. Consider taking a first-aid class.

Do not give these foods and drinks:

- Juice or other sweet drinks
- Honey
- Cow’s milk
- Soy milk
- Goat’s milk

Choking hazards:

- Chunks of meat or cheese
- Whole grapes
- Hot dogs
- Popcorn
- Raw vegetables
- Hard or sticky candy
- Nuts (whole or chopped)
- Thickly spread or chunky peanut butter

Food guide for your baby's first year:

Birth to 4–6 months	Around 6 months	6–8 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give your baby a vitamin D supplement if you breastfeed only. • Feed on demand after the first 2 weeks. A breast milk/formula feeding can be from 3 to 7 to ounces. • Watch for signs of hunger, such as alertness, rooting, mouthing. • Watch for signs that baby is full (turning head away, pulling back from the nipple). Babies know when to stop eating. • Always hold your baby when giving a bottle. • Don't give extra water, or anything else to drink. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to feed your baby breast milk or formula. It's their main source of nutrition. • Offer small spoonfuls of mashed avocado, banana, or pureed sweet potato. • Offer infant oatmeal or other whole-grain infant cereal (mix with breast milk or formula). • Offer other single-item purees, such as fruits, vegetables, meats, beans, and plain whole-milk yogurt. • If there are no allergy concerns (serious eczema; egg allergy), you can introduce peanut products. Follow the directions on My Doctor Online. Don't give whole peanuts or chunky peanut butter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue breast and/or formula feeding. • Offer water in a cup with meals. Don't give juice or other sweet drinks. • Offer new foods, such as scrambled eggs, cottage cheese, or soft tofu. • Mix mashed banana and plain whole-milk yogurt. If there are no allergy concerns, you can also mix in a small amount of smooth peanut butter. • Continue to offer a variety of foods. Babies usually need to try a food 10+ times before accepting it. • Don't add sugar or salt to foods. • Let baby start to feed themselves. A meal of solid foods can be from 4 to 7 tablespoons. • Let baby decide when and how much to eat. Watch for signals your baby is hungry and full.
8–10 months	10–12 months	1 year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed your baby solid foods before giving breast milk or formula. A meal can be 5 to 8 tablespoons. • Give water. Don't give juice or other sweet drinks. • Offer different fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. • Try finger foods, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Soft shredded or grated cheese ◦ Whole-grain toast squares with thinly spread peanut or other nut butter, or hummus ◦ Scrambled eggs ◦ Soft pieces of fruit ◦ Cooked vegetables ◦ Ground or finely chopped cooked chicken, fish, or tofu ◦ Cooked beans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue breastfeeding as long as you are both enjoying it. • Offer mashed or chopped foods from the family table, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Whole-grain breads ◦ Fruits ◦ Cooked vegetables, soft meats, chicken, fish, tofu ◦ Beans ◦ Cooked eggs • Let your baby sit at the family table and use a spoon or hands to feed themselves. A meal can be from 6 to 12 tablespoons. • Try not to pressure your baby to eat, and keep mealtimes relaxed. • Slowly reduce the number of feedings from breast or bottle as your baby eats more food and drinks using a cup. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop giving your baby formula. Replace with 4 ounces of whole milk or full-fat soy milk. • Don't give juice or other sweet drinks. • Serve drinks only in a cup. • Give 2 to 3 healthy small meals a day plus snacks. A meal of solid foods can be from 8 to 16 tablespoons. • Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables during the day. • Offer healthy foods at regular times and let your child decide how much to eat. It's normal for your child's appetite to change. • Sit together at the table to eat, without distractions, such as phones or TV. • Don't bribe or reward your child with food.

Other resources: ✓ Download our app, [My Doctor Online](#), at the App Store or Google Play.
 ✓ Visit kp.org/mydoctor for more resources.

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other medical professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist.

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