

Infant Nutrition

Infant Feeding Chart						
Age	Signs of readiness	Breast milk or infant formula	Cereals & breads	Vegetables	Fruits	Proteins
0-4 mos	✓ Only sucks and swallows	5-10 feedings/ 15-32 fluid oz per day	none	none	none	none
4-6 mos	✓ Does not thrust food out with tongue ✓ Sits up with support	4-7 feedings/ 26-40 fluid oz per day	Iron-fortified single grain cereals (mixed with 2-3 tsp formula/ breast milk or water and feed with a spoon)*	Start with 1-2 tsp pureed and advance to 1tbs*	Start with 1-2 tsp pureed and advance to 1tbs*	none
6-8 mos	✓ Holds head up, moving it voluntarily ✓ Opens mouth when he sees food	3-5 feedings/ 26-32 fluid oz per day	Infant cereals 3-9 Tbsp per day 2 solid feedings per day 7-8 mos teething biscuits	Strained or mashed, cooked veggies. Start with mild tasting veggies (carrots, squash, peas) (1/2 - full jar or 1/4 - 1/2 cup/day)	Strained or mashed fruits, mashed bananas or applesauce (1 jar or 1/2 cup per day)	Protein is not required but you may start trying these foods: 1/8-1/4 cup of pureed meats (chicken, beef, pork), hardboiled egg yolk, pureed cooked legumes or tofu
8-10 mos	✓ Moves tongue from side to side ✓ Begins spoon feeding herself with help	3-4 feedings/ 21-32 fluid oz per day	Infant cereals or plain, hot cereals. Finger foods: Toast, bagels or crackers, Cheerios/dry cereal	1/4-1/2 cup per day of cooked, mashed vegetables	1/4-1/2 cup per day of peeled soft fruit wedges, bananas, peaches, pears, oranges, apples	1/8-1/4 cup of ground or finely chopped, boneless chicken, lean meats, cooked dried beans, whole fat yogurt/cottage cheese
10-12 mos	✓ Begins to chew and has some teeth ✓ Begins to hold food and use her fingers to feed herself (Pincer grasp)	3-4 feedings/ 21-29 fluid oz per day by cup or bottle	Infant or cooked cereal, unsweetened cold cereals, whole wheat breads, mashed potatoes, rice, noodles, spaghetti	Cooked vegetable pieces. Some raw veggies like cucumbers, tomatoes	All fresh fruits peeled & seeded or canned fruits packed in water	Small, tender pieces of chicken, fish (no bones) or lean meat. Cheese/ yogurt/whole fat dairy. Cooked beans, scrambled eggs.

*You do not have to even give oatmeal or rice cereal. You may start with any food.

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Parents are often looking for exact instructions on how to feed their infant. There are none. You should learn your child's cues for being hungry and satisfied and feed accordingly. Your child's growth chart should act as a reflection on how you are doing. Below are some GUIDELINES and a helpful chart to give you some ideas on feeding. Above all, relax and enjoy!

Infants 0-4 months of age should receive their complete nutrition in the form of infant formula or breast milk. Do NOT use low iron formulas. Iron is important for brain growth. If your child is constipated, discuss treatment with your doctor.

When do I start foods?

The best time to begin starting solid/strained foods and using a spoon, is when your baby can sit with some support and voluntarily move his head to engage in the feeding process. Feed him until he looks away and is no longer interested. The time of day does not matter; feed your child at a time during the day when your household is calm. It is easier to learn new things in a calm environment. After a few weeks of once daily feedings, feel free to move to 2 solid feedings a day, but not more. Most of the infant's nutrition should still come from breast milk/formula at 4-6 months of age.

The only "rules" about foods at this age are: wait 2-3 days between introducing new foods (so if your child has a reaction, you can tell what it is from), do not give more than 2 solid meals per day. A good rule of thumb during the first year of life is 2-4 tablespoons (1-2 ounces) of each kind of food per meal. If your child is still hungry after that amount, feed her more.

What about juices?

There is nothing nutritionally necessary in juice. Infants, who like juice, often become toddlers who only want to drink juice. Excessive juice intake has been linked to a higher likelihood of childhood obesity. Water at age 4-6 months is okay in small amounts, but should not replace formula/breast milk as the drink of choice. Orange and tomato juices can be started at 9 months of age.

What about protein foods?

All of the protein that your infant needs is in his formula or breast milk. It is not necessary to give pureed infant meats.

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When do I start introducing finger foods?

Your baby should be able to sit up on her own and pull herself up to a sitting position before starting finger foods. Crackers/infant teething biscuits can often be introduced at about 7-8 months of age. Do NOT walk away from an infant eating solids at this point. If they get a big piece in their mouth, be prepared to "swipe" it out with your finger. Finger foods are small, bite size pieces of soft foods. You may begin finger foods when your baby develops a pincer grasp (finger-thumb pickup), which usually happens around age 8-9 months. Start with dry cereals that are easy to dissolve in saliva (Cheerios are hard to beat). Only put a few pieces on your child's tray because they often have a tendency to "squirrel" food in their cheeks and you want them to learn to take a piece and then swallow.

When do I move to 3 meals a day plus snacks?

Most children have an interest in sitting at the table for meals, and have the ability to finger feed at age 9 months. This is a good time to introduce them to the family meal routine, and begin gradually increasing the amount of finger foods/table foods and decreasing the amount of mashed foods that require a spoon.

What foods should I avoid?

Honey should be avoided until age 1 year because of its link to infant botulism.

Egg whites, peanut butter and seafood, strawberries do not need to be delayed. New research suggests that delaying introduction to foods may actually increase the potential for developing an allergy to that food.

Avoid sweet foods and desserts in the first year of life, including chocolate.