



Helping Your Baby Grow

(6–11 Months)

As babies grow, they eat more food and a greater variety of foods. Here are answers to important questions you may have about your baby's nutrition.

What can I expect my baby to do as she grows?

At about 4 to 6 months of age, your baby will

- Begin to eat solid foods, such as iron-fortified infant cereal and pureed or strained fruits and vegetables.
- Bring objects to her mouth.
- Explore foods with her mouth.

At 7 to 9 months of age, your baby will

- Try to grasp foods, such as toast, crackers, and teething biscuits, with all fingers and pull them toward her palm.
- Move food from one hand to the other.

At 9 to 11 months of age, your baby will

- Reach for pieces of food and pick them up between her thumb and forefinger.
- Try to hold a cup.
- Pick up and chew soft pieces of food.

When and how should I introduce solid foods?

- Introduce solid foods when your baby can sit with support and has good head and neck control.
- Offer iron-fortified rice cereal as the first solid food, because it is least likely to cause an allergic reaction, such as a rash. Offer a small amount (for example, 1 or 2 teaspoons) of one new food at a time. Wait 7 days or more to see how your baby tolerates the new food before introducing the next new food.



- Introduce solid foods in this order: iron-fortified infant cereal, fruits and vegetables, and meats.
- Do not add honey to food, water, or infant formula because it can be a source of spores that cause botulism, which can poison your baby.
- Do not add cereal to bottles, and do not use “baby food nurser kits” (which let solid food filter through the bottle nipple along with the liquid).

When should I give my baby cow's milk?

- Continue to feed your baby breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula for the first year.
- Cow's milk, goat's milk, and soy milk are not recommended until after your baby's first birthday.

How can I protect my baby's teeth from tooth decay?

- Serve 100% fruit juice in a cup in small amounts, about 4 ounces per day.
- Do not serve juice in a bottle. Juice served in a bottle can cover your baby's teeth with sugar for long periods of time and contribute to tooth decay (early childhood caries).
- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle or allow him to have a bottle whenever he wants.
- Clean your baby's gums and teeth twice a day. Use a clean, moist washcloth to wipe his gums. Use a small, soft toothbrush (without tooth-paste) and water to clean his teeth.



When should I wean my baby from the bottle?

- As your baby begins to eat more solid foods and drink from a cup, she can be weaned from the bottle.
- Begin to wean your baby gradually, at about 9 to 10 months. By 12 to 14 months, most babies can drink from a cup.

How can I prevent my baby from choking?

- Avoid foods that may cause choking, such as hard candy, mini-marshmallows, popcorn, pret-

zels, chips, spoonfuls of peanut butter, nuts, seeds, large chunks of meat, hot dogs, raw carrots, raisins and other dried fruits, and whole grapes.

- Do not add cereal to your baby's bottle.

Should I give my baby sweets?

- Do not give your baby sweets, such as candy, cake, or cookies, during the first 12 months. He needs to eat healthy foods for growth and development.

Notes

Resources

American Dietetic Association
Phone: (800) 366-1655
Web site: <http://www.eatright.org>

La Leche League International
Phone: (800) 525-3243
Web site: <http://www.lalecheleague.org>

USDA Food and Nutrition Information Center
Phone: (703) 305-2554
Web site: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic>

This fact sheet contains general information and is not a substitute for talking with your baby's health professional about your particular concerns about your baby.