

Healthy Eating for Babies Age 6 to 12 Months

Breast milk is the best choice for milk until your child is 2 years or older. Babies who are not breastfed should be given store-bought formula.

When to start solid foods

At about 6 months when your baby:

- ✓ can sit in a high chair and lean forward
- ✓ can hold their head up
- ✓ watches and opens their mouth for the spoon
- ✓ can turn their head away to let you know they are full

What to serve

Offer a variety of flavours and textures so your baby can learn to eat the same foods as the family.

When and where to serve

Serve your baby food with the rest of the family when the family is eating.

How much to serve

Your baby knows how much to eat. It is normal for your baby's appetite to vary day to day. Never force your baby to eat.

- When full, your baby will shut their mouth, turn their head away, or push food away.
- When still hungry, your baby will open their mouth when offered food.

Tips for happy mealtimes

Babies enjoy feeding themselves.

Offer your baby small pieces of foods so they can learn to pick up food and bring it to their mouth.



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Give your baby a small spoon.

Offer food at the table, with no distractions.

Expect a mess - it is part of learning to eat.

What foods to avoid

These foods can cause illness and should not be given to babies:

- ✗ honey
- ✗ raw sprouts such as alfalfa, mung, and bean
- ✗ unpasteurized juice and milk
- ✗ raw or undercooked eggs, meat, poultry, fish and seafood

About peanut butter

Peanut butter can be introduced to most babies starting at 6 months of age. This includes babies with mild or moderate eczema, and babies whose parent or sibling has a confirmed allergic condition like eczema, food allergy, or hay fever.

To introduce peanut butter, add 15mLs (1 Tbsp) of smooth peanut butter to 15mLs (1 Tbsp) warm water (municipal tap water is fine). Mix until smooth and no lumps. Stir this into 30mLs (2 Tbsp) of prepared infant cereal. Offer to your baby as much as they want.

If your baby has severe eczema or an egg allergy, ask your doctor before introducing peanut butter.

Gagging

It is normal for your baby to gag as they learn to eat different textures. Gagging is not the same as choking.

Choking safety

Sit with your baby when they eat - never leave them alone. Also, it is not safe to give your baby food while they are strapped in a car seat.

Examples of foods that can cause choking:

- ✗ popcorn
- ✗ nuts or large seeds
- ✗ candies
- ✗ globs of sticky nut butter
- ✗ whole grapes
- ✗ hot dog wieners
- ✗ cherry tomatoes
- ✗ marshmallows
- ✗ hard raw vegetables like carrots and celery

Around 6 Months	7 - 8 Months	9 - 12 Months
<p>Offer solid food 2 to 3 times a day.</p> <p>Give mashed or finely minced foods.</p> <p>Your baby learns to eat by watching you. Eat with your baby at the table.</p> <p>Start with high iron foods like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well cooked, finely-minced meat, poultry, or fish (moisten with breast milk or cooking water) • baby cereal (iron-fortified) • mashed cooked egg (white and yolk) • mashed legumes such as beans, lentils or tofu <p>Once your baby is eating high iron foods, offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mashed cooked vegetables • mashed skinless fruit • nut butters mixed with baby cereal* <p>*If your baby has severe eczema or an egg allergy, ask your doctor before introducing peanut butter.</p>  <p><i>"My baby enjoys eating with the family."</i></p> <p>Note: Continue to give your breastfed baby a 400 IU Vitamin D supplement every day.</p>	<p>Offer 2-3 meals and 1-2 snacks a day.</p> <p>Give mashed and small pieces of soft foods from the family meal.</p> <p>Offer high-iron foods like meat, poultry, fish, eggs, legumes, or baby cereal two or more times a day</p>  <p><i>"My baby learns to eat when I eat with her."</i></p> <p>Meats and Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finely chopped cooked chicken, fish, meat, or egg (white and yolk) • legumes (beans, lentils) or tofu • nut butters mixed with baby cereal <p>Grain Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • baby cereal (iron-fortified) • oat ring cereal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small pieces of toast, crackers, pasta • cooked grains such as rice or quinoa <p>Vegetables and Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mashed or chopped pieces of soft vegetables (Cook hard vegetables until soft.) • mashed or chopped pieces of soft fruit (Remove tough skins and pits.) <p>Milk and Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small amounts of cheese or yogurt 	<p>Offer 3 meals and 1 – 2 snacks a day.</p> <p>Give cut up pieces of soft food from the family meal.</p> <p>Meats and Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small pieces of cooked chicken, fish, meat, or egg (white and yolk) • legumes (beans, lentils) or tofu • nut butters (spread thinly) <p>Grain Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • baby cereal (iron-fortified) • oat ring cereal • small pieces of toast, crackers, pasta • cooked grains such as rice or quinoa <p>Vegetables and Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small soft pieces of vegetables • small soft pieces of fruit <p>Milk and Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yogurt, cottage cheese • small pieces of hard cheese <p>Wait until your baby is 9 to 12 months and eating a variety of iron-rich foods every day before offering 'homo' (3.25%) cow's milk to drink.</p> <p>Note: After 12 months aim for about 500 mL of milk a day. Drinking too much milk or juice can make your child too full to eat iron-rich foods.</p>

Breast milk or formula – Offer according to your baby's hunger and fullness cues.
Water - Teach your baby to drink from a cup: offer small amounts in a lidless cup.
Juice – Avoid or limit juice to ¼ to ½ cup a day.
Lower fat milk, soy, or other plant based beverages – Wait until your baby is 2 years old.

For more information

- Call 8-1-1 to speak to a Registered Dietitian at HealthLinkBC.
- Read 'Toddler's First Steps' available online from HealthyFamiliesBC.ca

- Read Health File 69c 'Baby's First Foods' from HealthLinkBC.
- Search 'Life with Toddlers' on our Fraser Health website.

www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your health care provider.