

Let me sit at the table with my family.

Start giving me food you are eating that is safe for me. Be patient with me — I will be messy. I need practice to learn to eat. Please sit with me while I eat, and talk to me.



Start teaching me to drink from a small cup.

Be patient while I learn. As I start to eat more food, I will drink less breastmilk or formula. I will get better at using a cup. By around one year, I should be drinking just from a cup or the breast, not from a bottle. Please give me my cup just with meals and snacks.



Give me water, breastmilk or formula in my cup. I don't need to drink juice. Please don't give me any sweet drinks or soda. These drinks are bad for my teeth and they fill me up.

9 to 12 months

When I am ready, let me start feeding myself with a spoon or my hands.



Here are some good finger foods:

- small pieces of peeled soft fruits and soft cooked vegetables
- small pieces of cooked ground meat
- small pieces of dry cereal
- toasted bread squares, unsalted crackers, teething biscuits, small pieces of soft tortilla
- small slices of cheese
- cut-up noodles



Keep me safe and healthy!

- Wash your hands and my hands before you give me food. Germs could make me sick.
- If you use a bottle to feed me, only put breastmilk or formula in it. If you feed me formula, mix it the way the can says.
- You can store bottles of breastmilk in the refrigerator for 5 days. Formula is safe for 24 hours. You can also freeze breastmilk—ask WIC how.
- Throw away what is left in the bottle when I am done. It could make me sick if I drink it later.
- Feed me from a small dish, not from the baby food container. Feed me with a small spoon. Use a clean spoon to take food out of the container. Germs from my mouth can spoil the food and I could get diarrhea.
- Throw away any food left over in my dish when I am done. You can keep the container in the refrigerator for 2 days after you open it.
- Don't feed me honey or foods made with honey. I could get serious food poisoning.
- Don't feed me any foods I could choke on, like hot dogs, nuts, seeds, popcorn, chips, grapes, raisins, raw vegetables, peanut butter, and candy.
- If you heat my bottle or container of food, please shake or stir it well, and test it before feeding me.
- When my teeth start to come in, brush them with a small soft toothbrush twice a day. Put a tiny dot of fluoride toothpaste on the brush. Wipe off excess toothpaste until I learn how to spit it out. Ask my doctor if I need fluoride drops.



Feed Me! 6 to 12 Months

A helpful
guide to
feeding your
6 to 12 month
old baby.



California Department of Public Health,
California WIC Program
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Around 6 months



Keep feeding me breastmilk or baby formula with iron.

It is still my main food. I need to breastfeed 6 times a day or more.

If I am drinking formula, I need you to feed me 4 times a day or more. My tummy can hold about 6 to 8 ounces at a time. If you're breastfeeding me, please continue until my first birthday or longer.

Let's cuddle while I eat. Even if I can hold my own bottle, I want to see your face. Don't prop up my bottle or put me in bed with it. I could choke or get tooth decay.

When I am about 6 months old, I am probably ready to try some solid foods. I need to be able to do all these things:

- sit up with support
- hold my head steady
- put my fingers or toys in my mouth
- show I want food by opening my mouth
- close my lips over the spoon
- show I don't want food by turning my head away
- keep food in my mouth and swallow it

If our family has food allergies or I was born early, talk to the doctor and WIC before you try feeding me other foods.



When I'm ready, try feeding me a little bit of solid food.

You can start with baby cereal with iron — try rice, oatmeal, or barley. Mix the cereal with breastmilk or formula — make it thin at first. When I get better at eating it, you can make it thicker.

Feed me my food with a baby spoon. Cereal in my bottle can make me gain too much weight — and I need to learn to use a spoon!

I need to sit up to eat. Hold the spoon near my mouth and wait for me to look at it. Then, put a little bit on my lips so I can taste it.

Be patient while I am learning to eat. If I won't eat baby cereal, wait a week and try again. I will do better when I am ready. Start feeding me baby cereal by about 7 months, unless my doctor says to wait.

6 to 9 months

I need to move through 4 stages of food:

- 1 Smooth (strained or pureed)
- 2 Mashed (smooth with a few tiny lumps)
- 3 Chopped (more lumps)
- 4 Tiny pieces of food



Be sure I can chew and swallow foods from one stage before I move to the next one.

I don't need teeth to eat soft foods. I use my gums and my tongue.

You can make my food.

You can use a blender, food processor, or baby food grinder. When I'm a little older, you can use a fork to mash my food. You will also get some baby foods for me from WIC.

Choose **healthy** foods. I need them to grow right. Help me learn to eat a variety of foods. Here are some good ones to start with:

- **Baby cereal:** rice, oatmeal, barley
- **Meats:** beef, chicken, turkey
- **Vegetables:** squash, peas, carrots, sweet potato
- **Fruit:** applesauce, bananas, pears
- **Other foods:** beans, egg yolk, tofu, cottage cheese, plain yogurt, rice, noodles

Wait until I am one year old to give me cow's milk or honey.

Keep my foods plain.

I don't need sugar, salt, spices, butter, fat, or gravy. When you choose baby foods from the store, choose **plain** vegetables, fruits, and meats. These are better for me than baby dinners or desserts.



Watch me for allergies.

If I'm allergic to something, I might get a skin rash, gas, or diarrhea, or I might have trouble breathing. **Stop** feeding me that food. Tell the doctor.

Give me only one new food at a time. Wait a few days before you try another new food. Take your time. That way you can see if I am allergic to anything.

Foods that babies are more likely to be allergic to are:

- cow's milk
- egg whites
- wheat
- corn
- soy milk or tofu
- fish or other seafood
- nuts



Most babies will outgrow these allergies.



I know when I am hungry.

I let you know by the way I act. Please feed me when I act hungry. I will open my mouth and be interested in food.

Wait until I open my mouth before you try to put food in. Wait until I am ready for each bite.



I know when I am full.

Let me eat until I show you I am full. When I turn my head away, that means I am done. Don't force me to finish my food or a bottle!

Give me a variety of foods.

Keep giving me new foods to try, so I will like lots of different foods. Keep trying — I might need to try a new food **about 10 times or more** before I decide I like it! I like to touch the food and smell it before I am ready to taste it.

Be patient with me. I will be messy. Let me touch my food. Please wait until I am done to clean me up.