

Feeding Infants



Babies are the best judge of how much food they need and their appetite may vary greatly from day to day.

Follow these tips to help your little ones learn to be healthy eaters:

- Feed infants when they are hungry; do not restrict them to a meal schedule.
- Let the child eat *their way* - much or little, fast or slow, steady or start-and-stop.
- If an infant is full, let him stop eating. It is not necessary to finish off a bottle, container of food or food on the plate. *Note: Ignoring fullness cues may cause a child to lose the ability to tell when they are hungry or full and lead to overeating.*
- To avoid waste, start with small amounts and add more if the baby is still hungry (see hunger cues below).

Hunger cues:

- ▶ Putting fists in mouth
- ▶ Rooting (when an infant opens her mouth and turns her head towards anything near the mouth)
- ▶ Excited arm and leg movements
- ▶ Sucking or smacking lips
- ▶ Aim to feed an infant before they get too upset and are crying from hunger (crying is a late hunger cue)

Fullness cues:

- ▶ Clamping lips together
- ▶ Turning head away
- ▶ Spitting out nipple
- ▶ Pushing away bottle
- ▶ Decreased or stopped sucking
- ▶ Milk dribbling out corner of mouth

Bottle Feeding Techniques:

- Put only breast milk or formula in the bottle. Do not put cereal, other food, juices, or other drinks in the bottle.
- Give the bottle to the baby at feeding time only, not nap time, and do not let the baby go to sleep with the bottle.
- Always hold the baby while feeding instead of propping the bottle in the baby's mouth. Do not let the baby walk or crawl around with the bottle. Tip the bottle so that milk fills the nipple and air does not get in.
- Never force a baby to finish what is in the bottle. Babies are the best judge of how much they need. To avoid wasting milk or formula, start with a smaller amount and add more if the child is still hungry.

What do babies drink?

It is not recommended to give children under 6 months of age anything to drink besides breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula. After 6 months it is okay to start introducing a small amount of water after feedings. Hold off on any other fluids (including 100% fruit and vegetable juices) until 1 year of age.

Age	Item	Amount*
Up to 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breast milk (preferred) Iron-fortified infant formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-6 oz/feeding
4-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breast milk (preferred) Iron-fortified infant formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-6 oz/feeding
6-8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breast milk (preferred) Iron-fortified infant formula Plain unflavored water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-6 oz/feeding Small amounts of water can be given after breast milk or formula
8-12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breast milk (preferred) Iron-fortified infant formula Plain unflavored water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-6 oz/feeding Small amounts of water can be given after breast milk or formula

Feeding Solid Foods

- Introduction of solids can begin as early as 4-6 months.
- Introduce one "single-ingredient" new food at a time and wait 3-5 days before introducing anything else to watch for possible allergic reactions.
- Choose foods that will provide key nutrients and help children meet their energy needs. Recommended first foods include: single-grain cereals, pureed vegetables and fruits, and pureed lean poultry or meats. You can make your own foods and thin them to a soupy consistency with breast milk or formula.
- Introduce a variety of foods by the end of the first year. Remember, when offering a new food, it may take up to 15 exposures till the child accepts the food, so keep trying!
- Avoid adding salt or any kind of sweetener. These are not necessary to make children like a food - this can be done by repeatedly introducing a food (see above).

Age	Item	Amount*
Up to 4 months	No Solids Recommended	
4-8 months	Single-grain, iron-fortified cereal	Up to 3 Tbsp
	Fruits and/or vegetables	
	Pureed lean poultry and meats	
8-12 months	Single-grain, iron-fortified cereal	1-4 Tbsp
	Fruits and/or vegetables	
	Lean poultry, meat, egg, cooked beans or peas	
	Cottage cheese or yogurt	
	Cheese	1/2 oz to 2 oz
	Bread	1/4 to 1/2 slice
	Crackers	2 crackers

* An infant may eat or drink more or less than what is listed here. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues and talk to your doctor if you're concerned about your infant's intake.