

For more information on feeding your baby contact your public health nurse, regional nutritionist or family doctor.

The information in this pamphlet originates from the Canadian Health Network, The Canadian Pediatric Society, Health Canada and INFACT Canada
Further Information visit:

- www.caringforkids.cps.ca/babies/Feeding.htm
- www.healthcanada.gc.ca
- www.canadian-health-network.ca
- www.dietitians.ca
- info@infactcanada.ca



**Yellowknife Public Health
Unit
4702 Franklin Ave
Yellowknife, NWT
X1A 2N5
www.yhssa.org
867-920-6570
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Introducing Solids

A collage of six images illustrating the introduction of solids to a baby. The images are: 1. A baby sitting on a yellow blanket eating a piece of fruit. 2. A baby in a white bib eating from a spoon. 3. A baby sitting at a table eating from a bowl. 4. A baby being fed with a spoon. 5. A baby being fed with a spoon, with a hand holding the spoon. 6. A baby being fed with a spoon, with a hand holding the spoon.

Complementary Feeding: Starting Solids

Deciding when and how you feed your baby solid foods are important decisions in the first year . Breastmilk or artificial milk (formula) is the most important food for the first year of life. Complementary feeding is giving other foods in addition to breast or artificial feeding starting around 6 months of age. It is a time of transition and fun where babies learn to experience foods with different tastes and textures. There are many ways to introduce solids. You and your baby together will decide what works best.

Health Canada and the Canadian Pediatric Association recommends starting solids at 6 months of age. Research has shown that feeding solids too early does not help your baby sleep through the night, and may lead to food allergies. By 6 months your baby's immune system is ready to handle other foods .

Babies are developmentally ready to start complementary foods when they:

- Can hold their head up without support
- Able to sit alone or with very little support
- Show interest in foods when others are eating
- Open their mouth when offered food and can turn head away when no longer hungry

Consider the following

- Raw hard fruit and vegetables, whole grapes, whole cherries, potato chips, pretzels, nuts, seeds, popcorn, gum, gumdrops, hard or chewy candy and jelly beans are not recommended
- Wieners are dangerous, offer little nutrition and are high in salt and fat. If you do offer hotdogs, slice them lengthwise and in small pieces
- Honey should not be given to a baby younger than one year of age because it may contain botulism spores which can make a baby sick.
- Gravies, sauces, french fries, fried or rich foods are hard for a young baby to digest.
- Sweet foods such as candy, chocolate, sugar, honey, jam, syrup and sugar coated breakfast cereals are not nutritious foods and may decrease your baby's appetite and may harm developing teeth.
- Flavored drinks, pop, coffee, tea, beer, wine and alcohol should never be given to babies.



Juice and Water

- When your baby is closer to a year old, he or she will be able to manage a cup alone. A two handled cup with a lid and spout will reduce spills.
- Babies who are exclusively breastfed don't need extra water, even in the summer
- Babies and children don't need to drink juice as it can fill them up and prevent them from eating nutritious foods.
- If you choose to give juice ensure it is 100% fruit juice and offered in a cup as part of a meal or snack. Limit amount to 4- 6 oz per day.

Finger Foods

At 8- 10 months off offer finger foods.

Good finger food choices to offer include:

- small soft pieces of cooked vegetables,
- soft ripe fruits such as banana
- melon without seeds
- bits of cooked or canned fruit
- Small pieces of tender cooked meat, poultry
- cheese
- plain rice cakes
- unsalted crackers
- dried toast and bread crusts.



The majority of these milestones should be met prior to starting complementary feeding.

NOTE: If there are allergies in your family, discuss when and how to introduce complementary feeding with a nutritionist, public health nurse or physician.

Tips for Feeding baby

- Give your baby foods that are rich in energy and nutrients. This is more important than the order in which the food is given.
- Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere for feeding your baby. Meals are a wonderful chance for you and your baby to learn about each other. Allow plenty of time for feeding. It is a fun time of exploration and new learning.
- Serve baby food at room temperature
- Be very careful if you microwave food to heat as babies mouths have been seriously burned because of uneven heating.
- Test temperature using a clean spoon to ensure the right temperature
- Thaw frozen baby food in the refrigerator
- Throw out any leftovers from your baby's bowl
- Learn to read your baby's hunger and fullness cues. Babies may show they are hungry when given food by waving their hands, opening their mouths, smiling or reaching forward.



- Babies show they are full by turning away, spitting out more than they take in, closing their mouths or falling asleep. Babies should never be forced to eat.
- Your baby's likes and dislikes may change from day to day. Do not force your baby to eat something he or she clearly does not want. Try again in a few days.
- Remember it may take a number of tries before your baby will become used to the taste and texture of a new food.
- Start with one tablespoon and gradually increase the amount based upon your baby's hunger cues of wanting more
- Do not trick or coax your baby to eat more. By following their own hunger cues they will be less likely to overeat later in life
- At 6 months introduce solids 2 times a day
- Gradually increase the amount and the number of times per day you feed your baby complementary foods.
- Make sure your baby is sitting upright when eating. Always watch your baby carefully to prevent choking.



Here are some general guidelines:

Food Texture	Age of Baby
Liquid	0- 6 months
Pureed or semi-liquid food	6 months
Mashed Food	7-8 mos
Minced or ground food	9-10 mos
Diced table food	10-12 mos

Developing Feeding Skills

- It is important to let babies try feeding themselves, as it helps your baby develop a sense of independence and coordination.
- Promote meal time as family time together
- At about eight to ten months of age you can introduce finger foods. Be prepared for a mess! Babies often like to play with or wear their food.
- As a guideline by 1 year of age your baby should be eating 3 meals and 2 snacks a day.
- Offer your baby foods he or she is curious about
- Food likes and dislikes may change from day to day. Be patient and offer a wide variety of nutritious foods.

- Serve baby foods from a cup or a dish. Use a clean spoon to take food from the jar to the serving dish.
- Only take out as much as your baby will eat at one time. Do not serve from the jar because baby saliva contains enzymes and bacteria that will make the rest of the food in the jar go watery and bad.
- Cover opened jars of baby food and keep in the refrigerator. Use refrigerated leftovers within two to three days.

Feeding The Older Baby

- As babies grow older, they need foods with a greater variety of flavors and textures. At seven to nine months it is a good time to switch to chunkier baby foods as babies are getting more teeth.
- The lumps should be soft and small enough that your baby won't choke on them if swallowed whole.
- Chewing is a learned skill and it is important for your baby to have the opportunity to experience different textures as waiting too long may cause difficulty.



Introducing New Foods

- Feed complementary foods after a breast milk or artificial feeding as these continue to be the most important source of nutrition for your baby throughout the first year.
- To reduce the chance of choking, solids should only be fed from a spoon, never from a bottle
- Food should be warm and not hot
- Don't give your baby mixed foods such as beef stew or mixed infant cereals until he or she has tried each individual ingredient first.
- Introduce a new food one at a time and wait **3-5** days before trying another. If there is a reaction you can then identify the problem food
- If a food allergy is suspected, eliminate the food you feel is causing a problem for a week or more. Retry and look for a pattern
- Some symptoms of allergy to watch for are rashes, stuffy or runny nose, diarrhea, vomiting and stomach pain/cramping.
- Choose plain foods. Avoid salt, sugar, spices and foods that are processed, cured or fatty. These are not healthy for your baby.

Most common causes of food allergies in children include: cow's milk, soy products, wheat, egg whites, peanuts, tree nuts(all nuts other than peanuts), fish and shell fish.

Introducing Complementary Food

Iron-containing foods are important first foods

The iron from breastmilk is very well absorbed (49%) because it comes with lactoferrin, lactose and vitamin C in the right amounts. Only 10% of the iron from infant formula and 4% from iron-fortified infant cereals is absorbed by babies. (INFACT Canada)

- Although Iron-fortified infant cereal is a common first food, meat is also acceptable at 6 months of age.
- Another Iron- rich food is Cream of Wheat cereal
- If your older baby refuses to eat Iron-rich food try adding yogurt, mashed potatoes, noodles, rice and porridge. Add well cooked meats, chicken, fish or mashed egg yolk to the potatoes, rice or noodles.
- Iron in foods is absorbed better if eaten with foods containing Vitamin C

The table provides a list of foods high in nutrients. Whole milk can be introduced between 9-12 months and egg yolk at 8 months.

to be blended and stirred several times to get a smooth texture.

- Extra homemade baby food can be frozen immediately after it is prepared
- For small servings, freeze baby food until solid in clean ice cube trays covered with plastic wrap or foil. Frozen cubes can then be transferred into clean freezer bags
- Baby food can also be frozen and stored in small covered glass or plastic containers. Label each container with the date and contents.
- Fresh homemade baby food can be kept in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours. Frozen baby food can be safely stored in the freezer section of a refrigerator for two or three weeks or in a deep freezer for three to six months.



Safety Guidelines for Store Bought or Commercial Baby Food

- Make sure the safety seal has not been broken before opening a new jar of baby food. There should always be a "pop" as you twist the cap open and break the vacuum seal. Do not use any baby food that has not been properly sealed.

Helpful Hints Include:

- Wash your hands before you start. Wash all utensils in hot soapy water and rinse well.
- Rinse fresh vegetables or fruit well.
- Choose fresh or frozen foods.
- Canned fruit in juice not syrup is excellent to make baby food.
- Avoid foods with added salt, sugar or seasonings.
- To prepare vegetables or fruit, remove pits or seeds, peel and chop. Cook until just tender by steaming, boiling in a little water, or microwaving.
- Use a blender, food processor, food mill, or strainer to puree the food.
- Blend or puree with the cooking water to get the right texture.
- Canned foods do not require cooking before being pureed.
- Choose lean meat, fish or poultry. Avoid any products which are salty, smoked or fatty such as bacon, bologna, lunch meats, wieners, sausages or breaded frozen fish.
- Cook meat, poultry, fish or dried peas, beans or lentils until well done and tender. Do not add fat. Remove skin, fat and bones. Dice, chop, mash, or blend. Add the cooking liquid to get the desired texture. Most meats need

Foods High in...

Iron	Vitamin A	Vitamin C	Vitamin D
Liver	Egg yolk	Kiwi	Fish
Beef	Carrots	Orange	Whole milk
Chicken (dark meat)	Sweet potatoes	Berries	Liver
Caribou	Pumpkin	Melon	Egg Yolk
Moose	Squash	Tomato	
Wild Birds	Mango	Banana	
Deboned fish	Spinach	Peach	
Egg Yolk	Butter		
Lamb			
Pork			
Beans, Lentils			
Tofu			

Vegetables and Fruits



Vegetables and Fruits provide many important vitamins and mineral to your baby's diet

- Start with pureed or strained vegetables and fruit
- As your baby gets older and starts finger foods be sure to cut soft fruit and vegetables into small pieces and remove hard skin and seeds.



Vegetables Pureed & cooked	Fruits to start Pureed or mashed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squash, All types • Sweet potatoes • Carrots • Peas • Green beans • Potatoes • yams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bananas (give fresh mashed) • Pears • Peaches • Blueberries • Nectarines • Apricots • Applesauce

Grains and Bread Products

Grains and Bread Products are an important source of fibre in the diet. These foods are the main source of carbohydrates which provides toddlers with easy to use fuel. Healthy choices include:

- Whole grain breads
- Whole grain pasta
- Whole grain Crackers
- Brown rice
- Couscous
- Bulgur
- Bran muffins



Milk Products

- At nine months, you can offer dairy products such as yogurt, cottage cheese or grated hard cheese.
- At 9-12 months, whole cow's milk (Homo or 3%) may be started
- At 12 months more than 24 oz per day may impact their appetite for solid foods
- 2%, 1% or skim milk should not be introduced to children under 2 years of age. The higher fat milk is needed for energy and brain growth



Introduction to Homemade Baby Food

- Making homemade food for your baby is easy and should not be intimidating. Food can be prepared at the same time as the rest of the family. Many babies prefer the taste and texture of homemade food. You know exactly what your baby is eating and homemade food may be less expensive than commercial baby food.
- Homemade baby food and store bought can provide equally good nutrition for your baby
- Homemade food may cost less, tastes and looks better than store bought food and can be prepared when cooking for your family