



# Feeding and Swallowing Milestones: Age Ranges

These milestones are designed to help you know what to expect as your child grows and develops and to know when to seek the guidance of a speech-language pathologist. When reviewing the milestones, also consider the age ranges below and above your child's age. These milestones are not meant to be a screening or diagnostic tool.



These milestones cover feeding and swallowing development in children.

Each child develops uniquely, even within the same family, and may meet certain milestones earlier or later than others. If your child does not meet many of the milestones within their age range, visit ASHA ProFind to find an ASHA-certified speech-language pathologist (SLP) for an assessment.

## **Birth to 3 Months**

### What can my baby do?

Holds head up when supported

Turns head towards nipple and opens mouth

### How does my baby eat and drink?

Latches to nipple

Sucks and swallows

### What should my baby be eating and drinking?

Human milk and/or formula (IDDSI Level 0)

## **4 to 6 Months**

### What can my baby do?

Brings hands to the breast or bottle

Pats breast or bottle

Brings hands or toys to mouth

Starts to sit up in cradle position and holds breast or bottle during feeding

Sits supported in highchair with straps and when reclined

### How does my baby eat and drink?

Opens mouth for spoon

Uses tongue to move food to back of mouth for swallowing

### What should my baby be eating and drinking?

Human milk and/or formula (IDDSI Level 0)

Infant cereal mixed with breast milk or formula\* (IDDSI Level 3)

Smooth baby foods (purees) with no lumps or chunks (IDDSI Level 4)

\*Consult with pediatrician regarding appropriate infant cereals

## **6 to 9 Months**

### What can my baby do?

Holds head up when sitting upright

Leans forward to receive foods

Still needs support from highchair around waist and legs, including footrest

Reaches for toys and food

Picks up food with fingers

Brings foods to mouth with hands and starts to feed self

Tries to hold spoon

### How does my baby eat and drink?

Starts to drink from a cup, but may bite cup edge or straw; some liquid spills out of mouth

Drools less

Moves food around mouth using tongue

Munches

### What should my baby be eating and drinking?

Human milk and/or formula; may start drinking small amounts of water (IDDSI Level 0)

Smooth baby foods (purees) with some lumps (minced and moist) like mashed potatoes, applesauce, oatmeal, or pudding (IDDSI Level 5)

Soft, chewable, solid foods cut into strips like a pancake, toast, or cheese (IDDSI Level 6)

## **9 to 12 Months**

### What can my baby do?

Holds bottle or sippy cup with both hands

Sits upright in highchair with minimal assistance

Holds spoon during meal

Feeds self with fingers

### How does my baby eat and drink?

Takes a small bite from a larger piece of food

Begins chewing food on both sides of mouth (called "rotary chewing")

Closes lips during swallow

### What should my baby be eating and drinking?

Soft, bite-sized foods like sliced banana, cheese cubes, or pasta (IDDSI Level 6)

Human milk and/or formula; may drink small amounts of water (IDDSI Level 0)

## **What can I do to help?**

You know your child best, so don't wait to get help if your child is having trouble breastfeeding, bottle-feeding, or eating solid foods. Getting help early can prevent problems with eating and can foster a healthy relationship with food for you and your child.

**Please visit the website below for more information and different age levels:**

<https://www.asha.org/public/developmental-milestones/feeding-and-swallowing-milestones/>