



# Airplane Choo Choo

Every baby is unique; don't worry if your baby eats a little more or less than this guide suggests. Keep in mind that the suggested serving sizes are only guidelines to help you get started.\*



## Typical Portion Sizes and Daily Servings for Children 0-24 months<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

Age (months)	Food Group	Foods Options (Serving Size)	Servings Per Day	Not Recommended
<b>0-6 months</b> 0 6	<b>Breast Milk or Iron-Fortified Infant Formula</b>	Breast milk (recommended) or iron-fortified infant formula should be your baby's sole source of nutrition for the first six months of life. Work with your pediatrician to track feeding patterns to ensure your infant is eating enough for growth.		Food or beverage other than breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula
<b>6-8 months</b> 6 8	<b>Breast Milk or Iron-Fortified Infant Formula</b>	Breast milk (recommended) or iron-fortified infant formula should be a major source of nutrition during this period of your baby's life. Work with your pediatrician to track feeding patterns to ensure your infant is eating enough for growth.		
	<b>Dairy</b>	Plain whole milk yogurt, including soy-based yogurt, or cheese	Can start to introduce	Cow's milk or fortified soy beverage; sweetened yogurt; unpasteurized (raw) milk, yogurt and cheese
	<b>Grain**</b>	Iron-fortified infant cereal (2-4 Tbsp.) Crackers (2) or bread (1/2 slice)**	2 servings 1 serving	Popcorn
	<b>Fruit or Vegetables</b>	Strained or pureed fruit and vegetables (2-3 Tbsp.)	1-2 servings	Raisins, whole grapes, dried, hard, raw fruits (e.g., apples) Dried, hard, raw vegetables (e.g., green beans)
	<b>Protein</b>	Strained or pureed meat (1-2 Tbsp.) Beans (1-2 Tbsp.)	1-2 servings	Uncut stringy meats, hot dog pieces or peanuts/peanut butter
	<b>Beverage</b>	Plain, fluoridated water	Up to 4-8 ounces	Plant-based milk alternatives; sports, energy or soft drinks; tea; lemonade; caffeinated beverages; fruit juice

\*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).

\*\*Choose whole grain more often.



Typical Portion Sizes and Daily Servings for Children 0-24 months<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

Age (months)	Food Group	Foods Options (Serving Size)	Servings Per Day	Not Recommended
<b>8-12 months</b> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">8</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">12</span>	<b>Breast Milk or Iron-Fortified Infant Formula</b>	Breast milk (recommended) or iron-fortified infant formula should be a major source of nutrition for the first twelve months of life. Work with your pediatrician to track feeding patterns to ensure your infant is eating enough for growth.		
	<b>Dairy</b>	Plain whole milk yogurt including soy-based yogurt (1/2 c.), cheese (1/2 oz.)	1 serving	Cow's milk or fortified soy beverage; sweetened yogurt; unpasteurized (raw) milk, yogurt and cheese
	<b>Grain**</b>	Iron-fortified infant cereal (2-4 Tbsp.), bread (1/2 slice), crackers (2) or pasta (3-4 Tbsp.)**	2 servings	Popcorn, baked goods
	<b>Fruit or Vegetables</b>	Strained or pureed fruit and vegetables (3-4 Tbsp.)	2-3 servings	Raisins, whole grapes, dried, hard, raw fruits or vegetables (e.g., apples, green beans)
	<b>Protein</b>	Strained or pureed meat (3-4 Tbsp.) and beans (1/4 c.)	2 servings	Uncut stringy meats, hot dog pieces or peanuts/peanut butter
	<b>Beverage</b>	Plain, fluoridated water	Up to 4-8 ounces	Plant-based milk alternatives; sports, energy or soft drinks; tea; lemonade; caffeinated beverages; fruit juice
<b>12-24 months</b> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">12</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">24</span>	<b>Breast Milk</b>	Breastfeeding may be continued as long as mutually desired by both mother and child.		
	<b>Dairy</b>	Plain whole milk <sup>a</sup> or fortified unsweetened soy beverage (1/2 c.), cheese (1/2 oz.) or yogurt (1/2 c.)	4-5 servings	Non-fat and flavored milk; unpasteurized (raw) milk, yogurt and cheese
	<b>Grain**</b>	Bread (1/4-1/2 slice), bagel/bun (1/4-1/2), ready-to-eat cereal (1/3-1/2 c.), cooked cereal (1/4-1/2 c.), or rice/pasta (1/4-1/3 c.)**	6 servings	Fried pastries and cereal mixes
	<b>Fruit</b>	Whole fruit (1/2 small), cooked, canned (in own juice) or chopped (1/4-1/3 c.), or berries (1/3-1/2 c.)	2-3 servings	Difficult to chew whole fresh fruits, especially those with peels; dried fruits, whole grapes and raisins
	<b>Vegetables</b>	Cooked, canned or fresh chopped (1/4-1/3 c.)	2-3 servings	Difficult to chew fresh vegetables, especially those with peels
	<b>Protein</b>	Beef, pork, poultry or fish (1-3 Tbsp.), beans, pulses or chopped nuts (2-4 Tbsp.), or egg (1 small)	2 servings	Undercooked meat served in chunks larger than 1/4-inch pieces; whole nuts, hot dogs, raw or undercooked eggs
	<b>Beverage</b>	Plain, fluoridated water	Enough to meet hydration and fluoride needs; consult your pediatrician for specific advice	Plant-based milk alternatives; sports, energy or soft drinks; tea; lemonade; caffeinated beverages; toddler milks/drinks; 100% fruit juice (no more than 4 oz. per day); juice drinks that contain added sugars

\*\*Choose whole grain more often.

<sup>a</sup>After 24 months: low-fat milk (1%) can be considered if growth and weight appropriate.

**Airplane Choo Choo** FEEDING TIPS FOR 0-6 MONTHS

*The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for approximately the first six months of life and continuation after complementary foods have been introduced for at least the first year of life and beyond, as long as mutually desired by mother and child.<sup>4</sup> If breastfeeding is not an option, iron-fortified infant formula will meet the needs of full-term healthy babies for the first 6 months of life.<sup>4</sup>*

**Breast Feeding Tips\***

- Plan to begin nursing your newborn within the first hour of birth.<sup>4</sup>
- Work with your pediatrician to track your baby's feeding patterns to ensure the infant is eating enough for growth. Breast fed infants should be supplemented with vitamin D.<sup>4</sup>

**Storage Tips**

- When away from your baby continue to pump at regular feeding times and refrigerate the milk within 4 hours.<sup>2,5</sup>
- Refrigerated breast milk should be used within 4 days of collection. If milk will not be fed within 24 hours freeze it.<sup>6</sup>
- Breast milk can be frozen for up to 9 months. Thaw frozen milk under warm running water.<sup>6</sup>
- Thawed breast milk can be stored in a refrigerator, but must be used within 24 hours or discarded.<sup>6</sup>

**Formula Feeding Tips\***

- Iron-fortified infant formula is the most appropriate substitute feeding for full-term healthy infants during the first year of life, who are not breast-fed.<sup>4</sup>
- Work with your pediatrician to track your baby's feeding patterns to ensure the infant is eating enough for growth.
- Your baby knows when they're full; there is no need to force your baby to finish their bottle.<sup>4</sup>

**Storage Tips**

- Always refrigerate prepared formula in bottles.<sup>6</sup>
- Never heat the bottle in the microwave. The milk can become too hot, even if it only feels warm to the touch. Warm bottles under warm running water or by placing in a bowl of warm water.<sup>5,6</sup>

**Do Not Do**

- Do not give your baby cow's milk or other animal milks.
- Do not give your baby plant-based milk alternatives.
- Other than breast milk or pediatrician-approved formulas, you should not be giving your baby any other liquids at 0-6 months.

\*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).

## Airplane Choo Choo FEEDING TIPS FOR 6-8 MONTHS

Complementary foods can be introduced at approximately 6 months of age.<sup>4</sup> To provide adequate nutrition, continue to feed your baby breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula while introducing complementary foods. The time that your infant is 6-8 months of age is a critical window for initiating complementary foods because of the developmental processes occurring during this time.<sup>4</sup>



### Each baby's readiness for food depends on their rate of development, but generally your baby is ready for food when...<sup>5,7</sup>

- Your baby has the strength and stability to sit upright alone or with support.
- Your baby has the ability to control their head and neck.
- Your baby is trying to grasp small objects like food or toys.
- Your baby shows interest in food by bringing objects to their mouth.
- Your baby can move food from a spoon into their mouth.
- Your baby is swallowing food rather than pushing it back out onto the chin.

### Do Not Do

- Do not give your baby cow's milk or other animal milks.
- Do not give your baby plant-based milk alternatives.

### Feeding Tips\*<sup>7,9</sup>

- Introduce one "single-ingredient" new food at a time.
- Offer a variety of different foods. Rest assured that it may take several attempts for your baby to accept a new food.
- Do not use your microwave to heat up your baby's food. It can become too hot.
- Continue to feed your baby breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula through the first year of life.
- Do not feed your baby fruit juice or other beverages including plant-based milk alternatives, soft drinks, coffee, tea or caffeinated beverages.
- Do not put cereal in a bottle without a discussion with your pediatrician.
- You can start feeding your baby in a high chair, but make sure it can't tip over. Be sure to secure your baby with the safety straps.



\*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).

## Airplane Choo Choo FEEDING TIPS FOR 6-8 MONTHS *Continued*

*Your baby is ready to try a variety of baby cereals and strained fruits and vegetables. You may introduce water in a cup. Do not worry if your baby cannot hold the cup, your infant will get the hang of it.*



### Introducing First Foods<sup>4</sup>

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends introducing first foods that provide key nutrients such as iron- and zinc-fortified infant cereals or pureed meats as your baby's first food.

- Feed your baby iron- and zinc-fortified baby cereals, not adult cereals.
- Use only single ingredient foods like rice cereal or pureed beef. Wait about 3-5 days before introducing another food to watch for an unhealthy reaction.
- Be patient! Your baby may refuse to eat a new food at first. Offer new foods multiple times; it can take more than 8 times before an infant accepts a new food flavor or texture.

### Introducing a Variety of Foods<sup>4,9</sup>

- Introduce one "single-ingredient" new food at a time and wait several days before adding a new food to be sure there isn't an unhealthy reaction.
- By 7 or 8 months of age, infants should be eating foods from all food groups (grains, meats, fruits, vegetables and dairy) and the variety of foods will continue to grow over the next several months.
- Although many pediatricians recommend offering vegetables before fruits there is no scientific evidence that it will change your baby's preference. Babies are born with a preference for sweets and it is not affected by order of introduction.
- Do not feed your baby fruit juice or other beverages including plant-based milk alternatives, soft drinks, coffee, tea or caffeinated beverages.
- Do not give your baby honey due to risk of botulism.



\*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).



## Airplane Choo Choo FEEDING TIPS FOR 8-12 MONTHS

Now is a good time to start feeding your baby “finger foods.” Finger foods are preferred after 9 months of age because they are small and bite-sized. They work well to help your baby learn how to feed themselves instead of being spoon-fed because effective handling of a spoon does not develop until after 12 months of age.<sup>4</sup> Respect the pace of your baby’s development to new taste and texture. Encourage them to experience the feel, the smell and taste of new foods to improve their development. The American Academy of Pediatrics encourages the consumption of meats, vegetables high in iron and cereals that are iron- and zinc-fortified.<sup>4</sup> If you haven’t already, begin to introduce meat to your baby during these months because it is a good source of iron and zinc.



### The Importance of Meats\*<sup>4</sup>

- Meats offer easily absorbed iron and zinc that are important for your baby’s growth. Offer meats daily. If you choose to feed your baby a vegetarian diet, talk to your pediatrician about how to meet recommended iron and zinc intakes.
- Feed your baby strained meats or make your own soft/pureed meats in the blender or food grinder.
- Only introduce single-ingredient soft/pureed meats like chicken, turkey, beef or pork. Wait 3-5 days and watch for an unhealthy reaction.
- Offer your baby 3-4 Tbsp. of meat 2 times a day.

### Do Not Do

- Do not give your baby cow’s milk or other animal milks.
- Do not give your baby plant-based milk alternatives.

### Feeding Tips\*<sup>4,5,9</sup>

- When your baby can sit up and bring their hands to their mouth, give your baby soft, easy to swallow finger foods or give a baby-size spoon and let them try to feed themselves.
- Be patient. Babies will make a mess when they feed themselves because they are learning new skills.
- Always check warmed foods before serving them to your baby to make sure they are not too hot.
- Avoid foods that your baby could choke on such as grapes, hot dogs, nuts, raisins, raw carrots, popcorn, hard candies, chunks of peanut butter and seeds.
- Do not feed your baby fruit juice or other beverages including plant-based milk alternatives, soft drinks, coffee, tea or caffeinated beverages.
- Do not give your baby honey due to risk of botulism.



\*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).

## Airplane Choo Choo FEEDING TIPS FOR 12-24 MONTHS

Your baby is a toddler and is eating foods with high nutrient content (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and dairy) because a variety of healthy food promotes good nutrition. Your baby grew very fast during the first year and needed to eat more food. After the first year, growth begins to taper off so their appetite can decrease and their food intake may appear irregular and unpredictable.<sup>4</sup>



### Introducing Milk\*<sup>4</sup>

- Serve your toddler plain whole milk. Most toddlers need the extra calories from the fat to make sure they have enough nutrients for growth and development.
- During the second year of life, low-fat milk may be considered if growth and weight gain are appropriate, or especially if weight gain is excessive, family history is positive for obesity, dyslipidemia (high cholesterol) or cardiovascular disease. Consult your pediatrician.
- Encourage your toddler to drink milk from a sippy-cup instead of a bottle to help with cup drinking skills needed for transition to an open cup.
- If your toddler cannot tolerate cow's milk, talk to your pediatrician about alternatives.

### Feeding Tips\*<sup>4,9</sup>

- Toddlers can be picky eaters, so offer small portions and never force them to clean their plate.
- Be patient if your toddler goes on "food jags." Keep trying to offer small amounts of new and previously rejected foods, but never force your toddler to eat them. It can take from 8 to 10 times of trying a new food, before a child will eat it.
- Your toddler has the skills to participate in family meals.
- Your toddler is ready to consume most of the same foods offered to the rest of the family.
- Let your toddler sit at the table in a booster seat to feel like a part of the family.
- Offer your toddler 3 regular meals and 2-3 snacks a day that are 2-3 hours before a meal.
- Do not feed your baby more than 4 oz. of fruit juice per day or other beverages including plant-based milk alternatives, soft drinks, coffee, tea or caffeinated beverages.

*The importance of role modeling – Caregivers should serve as role models by eating the same healthy foods that they want their infants and toddlers to learn to accept and like.<sup>8</sup>*

The following foods are hard for children to chew without a full set of teeth. They could cause your child to choke. Offer these foods **only** when the child can chew and swallow well. All finger foods should be small, bite-sized foods. Watch your child closely when eating them. Never leave your child alone while eating.

- Hot dogs
- Apple chunks or slices
- Hard candies
- Whole grapes
- Popcorn
- Chunks of meat or cheese
- Peanut butter
- Whole nuts/seeds
- Raw vegetables

\*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).

## Airplane Choo Choo Healthy Eating Behaviors

*Feeding your baby is not always easy, but it is important to encourage healthy eating habits. As parents/caregivers, you are important role models. To help your child develop healthy eating habits now and in the future, strive to model healthy eating habits yourself. For your baby, healthy eating habits begin with the very first foods and continue throughout childhood. Healthy eating habits are an important foundation for health throughout the lifespan.*



### Your Role in Feeding\*

- Provide a variety of healthy food options for your baby with every meal or snack.
- Determine where you will eat. Encourage family meals at home.

### Your Baby's Role in Feeding\*

- Determine how much and when they want to eat. Your baby will eat when hungry and stop when full.

### Tips to Encourage Healthy Eating Habits

- Encourage a well-balanced meal that is appropriate for your baby's age. Offer foods with high nutrient content like; fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and dairy.
- Offer a variety of healthy foods and limit unhealthy food availability in the home.
- Avoid excessive control and don't pressure your child to eat. Children know when they are full and ready to stop eating.
- Have regular family meals and encourage healthy eating habits by modeling good eating behaviors at each meal.
- Encourage your child to try new foods by offering a variety of foods every day.
- Water or milk should be the beverages offered to children.
- Do not feed your baby fruit juice or other beverages including plant-based milk alternatives, soft drinks, coffee, tea or caffeinated beverages.
- Offer meals and snacks around the same time every day to create a meal schedule.
- Refrain from offering sugar-sweetened or low-calorie beverages other than plain milk and water.
- Turn off the TV when eating meals to help your child be more in tune with their body's feeding signals.
- Offer your child appropriate portion sizes (see pages 1-2 of this guide).
- Refrain from rewarding your child with food.

\*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).





## Airplane Choo Choo



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\*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).



## Sample Menu for a Baby 8 to 12 Months Old

Now that your baby is eating solid foods, planning meals can be more challenging. At this age, your baby needs between 750 and 900 calories each day, of which about 400 to 500 should come from breast milk (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Breastfeeding-Mealtime-Milestones.aspx>) or formula (if you are not breastfeeding)—roughly 24 ounces (720 mL) a day. Breast milk and formula contain vitamins, minerals, and other important components for brain growth.



At about eight months, you may want to introduce foods that are slightly coarser than strained pureed foods. They require more chewing than baby foods. You can expand your baby's diet to include soft foods such as yogurt, oatmeal, mashed banana, mashed potatoes, or even thicker or lumpy pureed vegetables. Eggs (including scrambled) are an excellent source of protein, as are cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, and avocado.

### Sample menu ideas for an eight- to twelve-month-old:

1 cup = 8 ounces = 240 mL

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup = 6 ounces = 180 ml

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup = 4 ounces = 120 mL

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup = 2 ounces = 60 ml

#### Breakfast

- 2 to 4 ounces cereal, or 1 mashed or scrambled egg
- 2 to 4 ounces mashed or diced fruit
- Breastmilk or 4 to 6 ounces formula

#### Snack

- Breastmilk or 4 to 6 ounces formula
- 2 to 4 ounces diced cheese or cooked pureed or diced vegetables

#### Lunch

- 2 to 4 ounces yogurt or cottage cheese, or pureed or diced beans or meat
- 2 to 4 ounces cooked pureed or diced yellow or orange vegetables
- Breastmilk or 4 to 6 ounces formula

#### Snack

- 1 whole grain cracker or teething biscuit
- 2 to 4 ounces yogurt or fork-mashed or diced soft fruit

- 2 to 4 ounces water

## Dinner

- 2 to 4 ounces diced poultry, meat, or tofu
- 2 to 4 ounces cooked green vegetables
- 2 to 4 ounces cooked soft-whole grain pasta, rice, or potato
- 2 to 4 ounces diced or mashed fruit
- Breastmilk or 4 to 6 ounces formula

## Before bedtime

Breastmilk or 6 to 8 ounces formula, or water. (If breastmilk or formula, follow with water or brush teeth ([/English/healthy-living/oral-health/Pages/Brushing-Up-on-Oral-Health-Never-Too-Early-to-Start.aspx](#)) afterward).

## More information

- [Sample Menu for a One-Year-Old \(/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Sample-One-Day-Menu-for-a-One-Year-Old.aspx\)](#)
- [Starting Solid Foods \(/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Starting-Solid-Foods.aspx\)](#)
- [Breastfeeding Mealtime Milestones \(/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Breastfeeding-Mealtime-Milestones.aspx\)](#)
- [Ask the Pediatrician: Is it OK to make my own baby food? \(/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/Is-it-OK-to-make-my-own-baby-food.aspx\)](#)

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The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.



## Starting Solid Foods

Rice, oatmeal, or barley? What infant cereal or other food will be on the menu for your baby's first solid meal? Have you set a date?

At this point, you may have a plan or are confused because you have received too much advice from family and friends with different opinions.

**Here is information from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to help you prepare for your baby's transition to solid foods.**



## When can my baby begin solid foods?

Remember that each child's readiness depends on his own rate of development.

- **Can he hold his head up?** Your baby should be able to sit in a high chair, a feeding seat, or an infant seat with good head control.
- **Does he open his mouth when food comes his way?** Babies may be ready if they watch you eating, reach for your food, and seem eager to be fed.
- **Can he move food from a spoon into his throat?** If you offer a spoon of rice cereal, he pushes it out of his mouth, and it dribbles onto his chin, he may not have the ability to move it to the back of his mouth to swallow it. That's normal. Remember, he's never had anything thicker than breast milk (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Working-Together-Breastfeeding-and-Solid-Foods.aspx>) or formula before, and this may take some getting used to. Try diluting it the first few times; then, gradually thicken the texture. You may also want to wait a week or two and try again.
- **Is he big enough?** Generally, when infants double their birth weight (typically at about 4 months of age) and weigh about 13 pounds or more, they may be ready for solid foods.

*NOTE: The AAP recommends breastfeeding (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/default.aspx>) as the sole source of nutrition for your baby for about 6 months. When you add solid foods to your baby's diet, continue breastfeeding until at least 12 months. You can continue to breastfeed after 12 months if you and your baby want to. Check with your child's doctor about the recommendations for vitamin D and iron supplements (</English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Vitamin-D-And-Your-Baby.aspx>) during the first year.*

## Baby's First Foods



### How do I feed my baby?

Start with half a spoonful or less and talk to your baby through the process ("Mmm, see how good this is?"). Your baby may not know what to do at first. She may look confused, wrinkle her nose, roll the food around inside her mouth, or reject it altogether.

One way to make eating solids for the first time easier is to give your baby a little breast milk, formula, or both first; then switch to very small half-spoonfuls of food; and finish with more breast milk or formula. This will prevent your baby from getting frustrated when she is very hungry.

Do not be surprised if most of the first few solid-food feedings wind up on your baby's face, hands, and bib. Increase the amount of food gradually, with just a teaspoonful or two to start. This allows your baby time to learn how to swallow solids.

If your baby cries or turns away when you feed her, do not make her eat. Go back to breastfeeding or bottle-feeding exclusively for a time before trying again. Remember that starting solid foods is a gradual process; at first, your baby will still be getting most of her nutrition from breast milk, formula, or both. Also, each baby is different, so readiness to start solid foods will vary.

*NOTE: Do not put baby cereal in a bottle (</English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Cereal-in-a-Bottle-Solid-Food-Shortcuts-to-Avoid.aspx>) because your baby could choke. It may also increase the amount of food your baby eats and can cause your baby to gain too much weight. However, cereal in a bottle may be recommended if your baby has reflux (</English/health-issues/conditions/abdominal/Pages/GERD-Reflux.aspx>). Check with your child's doctor.*

### Which food should I give my baby first?

Your baby's first foods are your choice. Whether you decide to make your own baby food or buy premade baby food, you have many options. However, keep the following in mind:

- Foods should be soft or pureed to prevent choking (</English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Choking-Hazards-Parents-of-Young-Children-Should-Know-About.aspx>).
- Introduce one "single-ingredient" new food from any food group every 3 to 5 days. Look out for any reactions.
- There is no evidence that waiting to introduce baby-safe (soft) foods, such as eggs, dairy, soy, peanut products, or fish, beyond 4 to 6 months of age prevents food allergy. However, testing for peanut allergy (</English/health-issues/conditions/allergies-asthma/Pages/Peanut-Allergies-What-You-Should-Know-About-the-Latest-Research.aspx>) is recommended for babies with severe eczema and/or egg allergy. Check with your child's doctor about how and when to give peanut products.
- There is no evidence that your baby will develop a dislike for vegetables if fruit is given first.
- Be sure to include foods that provide iron and zinc, such as baby food made with meat or iron-fortified cereals.
- If you feed your baby premade cereal, make sure it is made for babies and is iron fortified. Baby cereals are available premixed in individual containers or dry, to which you can add breast milk, formula, or water.

Within a few months of starting solid foods, your baby's daily diet should include a variety of foods, such as breast milk, formula, or both; meats; cereal; vegetables; fruits; eggs; and fish.

## When can I give my baby finger foods?

Once your baby can sit up and bring her hands or other objects to her mouth, you can give her finger foods to help her learn to feed herself. To prevent choking ([/English/health-issues/conditions/chronic/Pages/Anemia-and-Your-Child.aspx](#)), make sure anything you give your baby is soft, easy to swallow, and cut into small pieces. Some examples include small pieces of banana, wafer-type cookies, or crackers; scrambled eggs; well-cooked pasta; well-cooked, finely chopped chicken; and well-cooked, cut-up potatoes or peas.

At each of your baby's daily meals, she should be eating about 4 ounces, or the amount in one small jar of strained baby food. Limit giving your baby processed foods that are made for adults and older children. These foods often contain more salt and other preservatives.

If you want to give your baby fresh food, use a blender or food processor, or just mash softer foods with a fork. All fresh foods should be cooked with no added salt or seasoning. Although you can feed your baby raw bananas (mashed), most other fruits and vegetables should be cooked until they are soft. Refrigerate any food you do not use, and look for any signs of spoilage before giving it to your baby. Fresh foods are not bacteria-free, so they will spoil more quickly than food from a can or jar.

*NOTE: Do not give your baby any food that requires chewing at this age, or any food that can be a choking hazard. Foods to **avoid** include hot dogs (including meat sticks, or baby food "hot dogs"); nuts and seeds; chunks of meat or cheese; whole grapes; popcorn; chunks of peanut butter; raw vegetables; fruit chunks, such as apple chunks; and hard, gooey, or sticky candy.*

## What changes can I expect after my baby starts solids?

When your baby starts eating solid foods, his stools will become more solid and variable in color. Because of the added sugars and fats, they will have a much stronger odor, too. Peas and other green vegetables may turn the stool a deep-green color; beets may make it red. (Beets sometimes make urine red as well.) If your baby's meals are not strained, his stools may contain undigested pieces of food, especially hulls of peas or corn, and the skin of tomatoes or other vegetables. All of this is normal. Your baby's digestive system is still immature and needs time before it can fully process these new foods. If the stools are extremely loose, watery, or full of mucus, however, it may mean the digestive tract is irritated. In this case, reduce the amount of solids and introduce them more slowly. If the stools continue to be loose, watery, or full of mucus, talk with your child's doctor to find the reason.

## Should I give my baby juice?

Babies do not need juice ([/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Fruit-Juice-and-Your-Childs-Diet.aspx](#)). Babies younger than 12 months should not be given juice. After 12 months of age (up to 3 years of age), give only 100% fruit juice and no more than 4 ounces a day. Offer it only in a cup, not in a bottle. To help prevent tooth decay ([/English/ages-stages/baby/teething-tooth-care/Pages/How-to-Prevent-Tooth-Decay-in-Your-Baby.aspx](#)), do not put your child to bed with a bottle. If you do, make sure it contains only water. Juice reduces the appetite for other, more nutritious, foods, including breast milk, formula, or both. Too much juice can also cause diaper rash, diarrhea, or excessive weight gain.

## Does my baby need water?

Healthy babies do not need extra water. Breast milk, formula, or both provide all the fluids they need. However, it is OK to offer a little water ([/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Recommended-Drinks-for-Young-Children-Ages-0-5.aspx](#)) when you begin to give your baby solid foods. Use an open, sippy or strawed cup and limit water to no more than 1 cup (8 ounces) each day. Also, a small amount of water may be needed in very hot weather. If you live in an area where the water is fluoridated ([/English/healthy-living/oral-health/Pages/Water-Fluoridation.aspx](#)), drinking water will also help prevent future tooth decay.

## Good eating habits start early

It is important for your baby to get used to the process of eating—sitting up, taking food from a spoon, resting between bites, and stopping when full. These early experiences will help your child learn good eating habits throughout life.

Encourage family meals ([/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Mealtime-as-Family-Time.aspx](#)) from the first feeding. When you can, the whole family should eat together. Research suggests that having dinner together, as a family, on a regular basis has positive effects on the development of children.

Remember to offer a good variety of healthy foods that are rich in the nutrients your child needs. Watch your child for cues that he has had enough to eat. Do not overfeed!

If you have any questions about your child's nutrition, including concerns about your child eating too much or too little, talk with your child's doctor.

## More information

- [Is Your Baby Hungry or Full? Responsive Feeding Explained \(/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Is-Your-Baby-Hungry-or-Full-Responsive-Feeding-Explained.aspx\)](#)
- [Ask the Pediatrician: When can I start giving my baby peanut butter? \(/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/When-can-I-start-giving-my-baby-peanut-butter.aspx\)](#)
- [Sample Menu for a Baby 8 to 12 Months Old \(/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Sample-One-Day-Menu-for-an-8-to-12-Month-Old.aspx\)](#)
- [Ask the Pediatrician: Is it OK to make my own baby food? \(/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/Is-it-OK-to-make-my-own-baby-food.aspx#%3a~%3atext=%E2%80%8BYes%2c%20you%20may%20find%20several%20benefits%20to%20feeding%2cAnd%20it%20may%20be%20easier%20than%20you%20think.\)](#)
- [Airplane Choo Choo: A Feeding Guide for Children \(https://www.usdairy.com/news-articles/airplane-choo-choo-a-feeding-guide-for-children\)](https://www.usdairy.com/news-articles/airplane-choo-choo-a-feeding-guide-for-children) (National Dairy Council)

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The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.