

Nutritious foods are very important to your baby's proper growth and development. This guide will help you make good choices about feeding your baby from birth to 12 months of age.



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CHILDREN'S HOME  
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# FOOD FOR YOUR BABY'S FIRST YEAR

A GUIDE FOR YOUR BABY'S NUTRITIONAL NEEDS



C H I L D R E N ' S H O M E S O C I E T Y O F C A L I F O R N I A

## AGE

## DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

## APPROPRIATE FOODS

0-5 MONTHS

Sucking/swallowing reflex; tongue thrust reflex; poor lip closure; poor control of head, neck, and trunk

**BABY CAN:**

Swallow liquids but pushes most solid objects from the mouth.

Breast milk; iron fortified infant formula

4-6 MONTHS

Draws in lower lip as spoon is removed from mouth; up-and-down movement of jaws; immediately transfers food from front to back of tongue to swallow; sits with support; good head control; uses whole hand to grasp objects

**BABY CAN:**

Take in a spoonful of pureed or strained food and swallow it.

Iron fortified infant cereal; breast milk; iron fortified infant formula

5-9 MONTHS

Up-and-down munching movement; positions food between jaws for chewing; begins to sit alone unsupported; begins to use thumb and index finger to pick up objects

**BABY CAN:**

Begin to eat mashed foods.  
Eat from a spoon.

Strained or pureed vegetables and fruits; iron fortified infant cereal; breast milk; iron fortified infant formula

8-11 MONTHS

Complete side-to-side tongue movement; begins to curve lips around rim of cup; sits alone easily

**BABY CAN:**

Begin to eat ground or finely chopped food.  
Begin to feed self with hands.  
Drink from a cup.

Strained, pureed, or mashed:  
meat, chicken, fish, beans, cottage cheese, cooked egg yolk, vegetables, fruits;  
finger foods:  
toast squares, unsalted soda cracker, soft tortilla, cooked vegetable strips or slices, peeled soft fruit wedges or slices, cheese cubes;  
iron fortified infant cereal; breast milk; iron fortified infant formula

10-12 MONTHS

Rotary chewing (grinding); begins to put spoon in mouth; begins to hold cup

**BABY CAN:**

Eat chopped food and small pieces of soft, cooked table food.

Mashed or chopped food from the family meal:  
meat, chicken, fish, cottage cheese, cooked egg yolk, vegetables, fruits;  
fruit juice in cup; finger foods (see above); iron fortified infant cereal;  
breast milk; iron fortified infant formula



## PLEASE REMEMBER

Breast milk is the best milk for your baby. Pediatricians recommend breastfeeding until your baby is a year old. Breast milk, iron-fortified infant formula, or a combination of both should make up the main food for your baby for the first year.

Feeding time is a learning time for your baby. Be patient and attentive to your baby's needs. When using a bottle, hold your baby close. Never prop a bottle or let your baby sleep with a bottle.

Start one new food at a time. Wait about five days before giving the next new food to detect possible allergic reactions.

Bottles are for plain water, formula, or breast milk. Do not give sweetened drinks, sodas, gelatin, sugar water, or juice. These promote "baby bottle tooth decay," which occurs when babies are regularly allowed to fall asleep with bottles in their mouths. The sugar in the juice or drink can cause serious tooth decay.

Do not give sweeteners, such as honey, corn syrups, or any food that contains these sweeteners (including cereals and graham crackers) to infants. They may contain spores that can cause infant botulism, a food poisoning that can lead to death.

Wait until the infant is 12 months old before introducing cow's milk. The child should drink whole milk until the age of two, at which time 2% milk can be given.

Possible allergic reactions to foods include: skin rash, gas, respiratory problems, and diarrhea. Foods that commonly cause allergic reactions include: cow's milk, citrus juice and fruits, egg whites, and wheat products.

Offer fruit for dessert. Babies do not need baby desserts, such as puddings, custards, and cobblers.

Never force your baby to finish a bottle. Throw away any formula left in the bottle. Offer small portions of food.

Buy plain one-item foods; avoid combination dinners. There is as much protein in one jar of strained beef as in two and one-third jars of strained beef and vegetables.

## RESOURCES

These resources provide more information about this subject:

**CHILD OF MINE:  
FEEDING WITH LOVE AND GOOD SENSE**  
Ellyn Satter

**BABYSENSE**  
Frances Well-Burck

**FEED ME: I'M YOURS**  
Vicki Lansky

**THE FIRST BABY FOOD COOKBOOK**  
Melinda Morris

**FEEDING YOUR BABY AND CHILD**  
Spock and Lowenberry

