

The Roswell Pediatric Center, PC

Infant Feeding Guide

1) Introduction

The Roswell Pediatric Center Feeding Guide is a collection of current guidelines of ways to safely introduce foods to your baby. Until recently, pediatricians advised parents to delay introducing the highly “allergenic foods” (such as eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish) until at least a year of age. However, current scientific studies have shown that early introduction of allergenic foods may decrease an infant’s risk of developing food allergies! These handouts reflect these new recommendations.

2) When should I introduce solid foods to my infant?

The best time to start solid foods is when your infant is between 4-6 months old and had met the appropriate developmental milestones listed in the “4-6 Month Old Feeding Handout”. Note, although the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for six months, it is acceptable to start solids earlier (4-6 months) if desired.

3) How often do I introduce new foods?

“The Three Day Rule”: Introduce only one new food (single ingredient) at a time. After you introduce your baby to a new food, do not introduce another new food for at least three days and watch carefully for signs of allergies. During this waiting period, feed him a variety of foods to which he has been previously introduced as well as some of the new food.

4) Is my baby considered at high risk for food allergies?

If your infant is being treated for atopic dermatitis/eczema or has a sibling or parent with food allergies, it is very important to share this information with your pediatrician. The timing or method of introducing the allergenic foods (eggs, nuts, fish) may need to be individualized for your infant.

5) What are the signs of food allergies?

- a) Allergy symptoms can occur in almost any part of the body, but most commonly they manifest in the
 - Digestive tract (**vomiting, diarrhea**),
 - Respiratory system (**wheezing, cough, hoarseness**)
 - The skin (**eye swelling, lip swelling, hives, eczema**)
- b) If your baby has a severe allergic reaction to a new food such as wheezing, difficulty breathing, or swelling of lips or tongue,
 - Call 911.
 - Give a dose of Benadryl.
- c) If your baby has a mild reaction to a new food or if you are not certain, please call our office.

6) Is it true that starting babies with fruits before vegetables will lead to a “sweet tooth” and a later refusal of vegetables?

No. Your infant will tolerate fruits and vegetables equally well. Sometimes your baby will spit out new foods, and it may take 5-10 days of trying a new food before the food is accepted. Do not interpret early food refusal as a disliking of the new food. Be patient.

7) Is my baby eating enough? How can I tell?

- a) Cues that your baby is hungry:
 - Turns toward food.
 - Opens mouth when sees food.
 - Gets excited when sees food.
- b) Cues that you baby has had enough to eat:
 - Turns head away.
 - Does not open mouth.
 - Pushes spoon away.
- c) Never force food into your baby’s mouth. Trust your baby to let you know how much he wants to eat.
- d) Try not to compare your baby to other babies. Healthy babies come in all weights, shapes, and sizes. They grow and gain weight at different rates.

8) What is the most important principle of infant and child feeding?

- a) Division of Responsibility: The parent is responsible for what, when and where the child is fed. The child is always responsible for how much to eat and whether to eat the foods offered by the parent.
- b) Your baby’s interest in eating will depend on many factors:
 - Amount of fluid receiving in diet.
 - Rate of growth.
 - Mood or feelings at the time of feeding.
 - Distractions in the environment.
 - The time of day.

9) Does my baby need vitamins?

- a) Vitamin D drops (**D-Vi- Sol**, one ml daily) are recommended for all infants under one year of age who are solely breastfed or receiving < 32 ounces of formula per day.
- b) Breastfed infants need additional iron starting at four months. Unless your infant is eating iron-fortified cereals or red meats at this time, start “Poly-Vi-Sol with Iron” (and discontinue the D-Vi-Sol).

10) Additional notes and recommendations:

- a) Honey is not safe for babies under one year of age as it can cause infant botulism.
- b) While commercial baby food products are fine, making your own is easy and fun. We recommend, Super Baby Food by Ruth Yaron, 3rd Edition.
- c) All caretakers (grandparents, babysitters...) should know how to manage a choking baby? To purchase a 20 minutes refresher on CPR, visit www.cpranytime.org

4-6 Month Old Feeding Handout

When Your Baby Is 4-6 Months Old And Can...	Your Baby Is Ready For You To...	Good Foods To Offer...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold head up. • Sit up in a high chair. • Open mouth wide when sees food coming. • Close lips over the spoon. • Make a chewing motion. • Move food from the front to the back of tongue. • Swallow the food. • Turn head to refuse food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer soft, smooth foods from a spoon. • Provide 1-2 meals daily. See Sample Menu. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ GRAINS AND CEREAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth, plain, infant cereals with iron. Mix cereal according to the directions on the package. ➤ VEGETABLES AND FRUIT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook, then mash or puree mild-tasting foods like squash, peas, sweet potatoes, green or yellow beans, apples, peaches, pears, apricots, and plums. ➤ MEATS AND ALTERNATIVES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puree or mash these in the liquid you cooked them in, water, or breastmilk. If you're formula feeding, you can use formula. • Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Beef, chicken, turkey, lamb, pork – Tofu – Well-cooked legumes, such as beans, lentils, and chickpeas – Cooked eggs – Fish: white fish (haddock, halibut, sole, cod), salmon, and canned light tuna – Peanut butter (single ingredient, no added sugar or salt)*

***If a sibling or parent is allergic to peanuts or tree nuts, or if your infant has had any previous food allergies or suffers from atopic dermatitis/eczema (severe dry skin), please discuss with your pediatric provider before starting these foods.**

Some of the material used in this handout is from Loving Care, published by the Nova Scotia Health Department. See novascotia.ca/dhw/lovingcare/.

6-8 Month Feeding Handout

When Your Baby Can...	Your Baby Is Ready For You To...	Good Foods To Offer...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit without support. • Pick up food with fingers. • Close mouth over rim of cup. • Drink from a cup with some help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare thicker, lumpier food. • Offer 2-3 meals per day. • Teach infant to drink from a cup. • Provide breastmilk and/or formula until one year of age. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ GRAINS AND CEREALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant cereal or small finger foods, like dry cereal. ➤ VEGETABLES AND FRUIT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chopped, minced, grated, or diced. • Fruits: stewed, canned, or raw. • Vegetables: cooked. ➤ MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chopped, minced, grated, or cut-up. • Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Beef, chicken, turkey, lamb, pork – Tofu – Well-cooked legumes, such as beans, lentils, and chickpeas – Fish: white fish (haddock, halibut, sole, cod), salmon, and canned light tuna – Shellfish – Cooked eggs – Peanut butter (single ingredient, no added sugar or salt)*

- As your baby begins to eat more solid foods, less breast milk or formula will be needed. Breastfeeding 4-6 times a day or formula intake of 20 – 32 ounces daily is normal.
- ***If a sibling or parent is allergic to peanuts or tree nuts, or if your infant has had any previous food allergies or suffers from atopic dermatitis/eczema (severe dry skin), please discuss with your pediatric provider before starting these foods.**
- Fluoride drops may be recommended for infants exclusively breastfed beyond 6 months (if not drinking tap water) and for infants whose formula is made with well water or non-fluoridated bottled water.

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9-12 Month Old Feeding Handout

When Your Baby Can...	Your Baby Is Ready For You To...	Good Foods To Offer...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use fingers to feed self. • Hold a spoon. • Attempt to hold cup be self. • Bite and chew food. • Note: Teeth are not needed to be ready to eat solid foods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer pieces of soft or lumpy foods. • Allow self-feeding with fingers or spoon. • Encourage drinking from a cup. • Provide breastmilk and/or formula. Whole milk is recommend <u>after</u> your baby's first birthday. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ GRAINS AND CEREALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-grain finger foods – pieces of bagel, dry toast strips, rice, roti, noodles, cooked pasta, flatbreads, cereal, and unsalted crackers ➤ VEGETABLES AND FRUIT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bite-size pieces of soft, cooked vegetables. • Bite-size pieces of soft, ripe fruit – bananas, peaches, kiwi, cantaloupe, and avocado. ➤ MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bite-size pieces of tender meat, fish, cooked beans, and tofu. • Peanut butter or other nut butters thinly spread on small pieces of whole grain bread or crackers* ➤ MILK PRODUCTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain yogurt • Cottage cheese • Shredded cheeses

- ***If a sibling or parent is allergic to peanuts or tree nuts, or if your infant has had any previous food allergies or suffers from atopic dermatitis/eczema (severe dry skin), please discuss with your pediatric provider before starting these foods.**

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Sample Menus For Infants 4-12 Months Old

Age	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
4-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastmilk or formula • Iron-fortified infant cereal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastmilk or formula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastmilk or formula • Iron-fortified infant cereal • Pureed fruits or vegetables • Plain pureed meat or meat alternatives
6 - 8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastmilk or formula • Iron-fortified infant cereal • Mashed fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastmilk or formula • Mashed or cooked vegetables • Plain mashed or finely chopped meat or meat alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastmilk or formula • Iron-fortified infant cereal • Plain mashed or finely chopped meat or meat alternative • Mashed, cooked vegetables or fruit
9-12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastmilk or Formula. • Iron-fortified infant cereal • Soft fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastmilk or Formula. • Chopped meat or meat alternative • Cooked pasta or cooked rice • Cooked vegetable, chopped or diced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastmilk or Formula. • Meat or meat alternative • Cooked pasta, cooked rice, infant cereal • Cooked vegetable, chopped or diced • Soft fruit and /or plain yogurt.

- Meat and meat alternatives include: beef, chicken, turkey, lamb, pork, white fish (haddock, halibut, sole, cod), salmon, canned light tuna, shellfish, cooked eggs, nut-butters, and well-cooked legumes such as beans, lentils, and chickpeas.
- For infants 4-6 months of age, breastmilk or formula is also given between meals and at bedtime.
- For infants 9-12 months of age, a small food snack (i.e., whole grain muffin, cubes of cheese, cheerios) can be offered between lunch and dinner.
- For infants 9-12 months of age, begin to offer occasional breastmilk or formula in a cup.
- As your infant approaches a year of age, it is reasonable to wean off a bedtime feed and make dinner the last meal of the day.
- After one year of age, milk should be offered with meals only.

Fluids and Vitamins

Breast milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies be exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months of life. This means your baby needs no additional foods (except Vitamin D) or fluids unless medically indicated. – Your breastfed baby will need 400 IU of vitamin D drops every day until one year of age or consuming more than 32 ounces of formula per day. – Babies should continue to breastfeed for a year or as long as it is mutually desired by the mother and baby.
Formula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Formula-fed babies consuming <u>less than 32 ounces</u> of formula daily will need 400 IU of vitamin D drops every day until at least 12 months old. – Quantity of formula consumed varies from infant to infant. Some babies seem to be “gas guzzlers” while some are more “fuel efficient.” As long as your baby is growing well and seems content, you don’t need to worry. – We recommend mixing your infant’s formula powder or formula concentrate with fluoridated tap water or “nursery water.” If you are using a “ready to feed” formula or use well water, notify your pediatric provider. Your infant may need a prescription of fluoride drops (see below).
Whole Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Whole milk may be introduced at 12 months on age. Low-fat milk should not be used until your baby is 2 years old.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Water can be introduced to your baby at 6 months of age. You can offer tap water as a drink between meals, especially in hot weather when extra fluids are needed. Notify your pediatric provider if you are using well water (see Fluoride below). Note that it is <u>not</u> necessary to boil water when making infant formula.
Juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Your baby does not need juice. It is not as nourishing as fresh fruits or vegetables. When babies fill up on juice, they eat less of the foods they need. Even 100% juice is high in sugar and can lead to tooth decay.
Fluoride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fluoride drops may be recommended for infants exclusively breastfed beyond 6 months (if not drinking tap water) and for infants whose formula is made with well water or non-fluoridated bottled water. – Please notify your pediatric provider if your infant falls into this category.
Vitamin D (D-Vi-Sol)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Breastfed infants and infants consuming less than 32 ounces of formula daily should be given 400 IU of vitamin D drops every day until age 12 months
Vitamins with Iron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Breastfed infants need additional iron starting at four months. Unless your infant is eating iron-fortified cereals or red meats at this time, start “Poly-Vi-Sol with Iron” (and discontinue the D-Vi-Sol). – When your baby starts eating iron-rich foods, you can switch vitamins back to the D-Vi-Sol.

Gagging and Choking

Your baby will gag and spit out food while learning to swallow, especially when trying lumpier or thicker foods. Gagging is a protective reflex which lessens as your infant gets more proficient at eating. Choking, however, is much more serious and occurs when food gets stuck in the baby's windpipe.

Foods That Can Cause Choking	How To Make These Foods Safer
Sticky Spreads: Peanut butter, tahini, and almond butter	Spread thinly on whole grain breads or crackers. Don't give spoonfuls of these foods.
Hard Foods: Some raw vegetables and fruit	Cook hard foods to soften them. Grate foods into smaller pieces.
Round, Smooth Foods: Grapes and cherries	Cut each one into 4 small sections. Remove seeds or pits.
Tube-Shaped Foods: Cooked baby carrots, hot dogs	Cut foods lengthwise into strips. Cut the strips into small pieces.
Stringy Or Chewy Foods: Meat, long thin pasta, and melted cheese	Cut these foods into small pieces.

Caution

The following foods can cause choking and are NEVER safe for babies:

- Nuts,
- Popcorn
- Hard candies, cough drops
- Gum
- Snacks using toothpicks or skewers
- Whole grapes
- Raisins and corn kernels
- Carrots cut into rounds
- Hot dogs
- Fish with bones

Do you and all who care for your baby (grandparents, babysitters...) know how to manage a choking baby? For a 20 minutes refresher on CPR available for purchase, go to www.cpranytime.org.

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