

Birth to 2 years

Why should I follow these guidelines for feeding my child?

Your child needs a high calorie diet to help them gain weight and stay healthy. You will need to take extra steps to help your child get enough nutrition to grow. This information will help you choose higher calorie foods.

| Age | Watch for these skills | Foods to offer | Tips to increase calories and learn healthy eating habits |
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| Birth to 6 months: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds head steady. • Uses hands to help hold the bottle steady. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breast milk or infant formula only. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may be given directions on how to add powdered infant formula to pumped breast milk for extra calories and nutrition. • You may be given directions for mixing an infant formula to get extra calories and nutrition. • Your baby's doctor will help you decide when your baby is ready to start baby foods. |
| 6 to 8 months: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts to sit without support. • Starts to hold a spoon while caregiver feeds. • Opens mouth for spoon. • Tries to bite food. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breast milk or infant formula. • Single-grain infant cereal. • Do not add cereal to a bottle unless directed by a health care provider. • Pureed or strained foods like fruits, vegetables, and meats. It does not matter what order you start these foods. • When shopping, look for baby foods with just one ingredient. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix infant cereal with breast milk or infant formula. • Read labels to choose baby foods with the most calories. The dietitian can also give you ideas of high calorie foods. • Add 1 teaspoon melted butter, margarine or oil (vegetable or canola) to 4 ounces of strained foods. • Offer foods one to three times a day. Start with 1 time per day. Increase up to 3 times per day as your baby begins to eat more. • Feed your baby in a high chair or other supported seat to help them focus on eating. |

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| 8 to 10 months: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can bite into foods. • Starts to use fingers for feeding. • Eats with up-and-down munching movement. • Takes sips from open cup. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breast milk or infant formula. • Continue foods listed for 6-8 months. • Multi-grain infant cereals. • Mashed avocado. • Pureed or strained foods with more than one ingredient. • Whole milk yogurt or pudding. • Mashed table foods. • Finger foods. • Dry cereal soaked in milk or formula. • Buttered toast and crackers. • Muffins. • Soft fruits or vegetables. • Cheese. • Pancakes or waffles with butter and syrup. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add extra strained meat to baby food dinners. • Add extra melted butter, margarine or oil to food to increase calories. Use 1 teaspoon per 4 ounces of food. • Add 2-3 teaspoons heavy cream to yogurt or pudding. • Puffs are very low in calories and do not provide good nutrition. • Give breast milk or formula instead of juice, Kool-Aid®, soda, fruit punch or water. • Feed your baby in a high chair. |
| 10 to 12 months: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts to eat using their fingers. • Can hold spoon and bring to mouth cannot use it for feeding. • Helps hold cup. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breast milk or infant formula. • Continue foods listed above for 8-10 months olds • Finely diced table foods. • Cooked, scrambled eggs. • Cottage cheese. • Pieces of soft meats, such as meatloaf, meatballs or chicken thighs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer breast milk or infant formula in a sippy cup with meals. • Do not give juice, Kool-Aid®, soda, fruit punch or water. • Give soft table foods or mash table foods with a fork. You can also use a food processor or food mill. • Read food labels to look for high calorie items. • Have your baby eat with the family. You are teaching them that meals are enjoyable. • Feed your baby in a high chair. |

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| 1 Year and older | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns to use a spoon and fork • Drinks from a covered or open cup • Decides when full and may stop eating at this time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start using whole milk or a pediatric nutrition drink, like PediaSure® in a cup with meals. • Give mostly small pieces of table foods. • Do not give small, thick or sticky foods that could cause choking like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Raw vegetables – Chips or pretzels – Nuts – Popcorn – Hot dogs or sausage links, unless cut into small quarters – Peanut butter, unless it is mixed with other food or is spread thinly on other food – Candy or gum – Raisins – Grapes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add butter, cheese, sauces, or heavy cream to increase calories to foods. Add about 1 teaspoon per 4 ounces of food. • Decrease how often you feed breast milk or infant formula. Replace with whole milk in a cup at meals and snacks. • Offer only water between meal and snack times to help your child be hungry at these times. • Do not give juice, Kool-Aid®, soda, fruit punch. • Give your toddler three meals and up to three nutritious snacks or mini meals per day. • To help with hunger at meals and snack times, do not allow grazing. This means no munching on cereal, crackers or puffs between meals and nutritious snacks. • Your child may not be as hungry after their first birthday. This is normal. • Eat meals together. Have your toddler eat at the table or in a high chair. |

Food Allergens

Once your baby is eating foods, you can also feed them foods with common allergens. This means you can offer them safe forms of peanuts, wheat, eggs, and fish. Here are some ideas for safely introducing these foods:

- Add 2 teaspoons of creamy peanut butter or peanut powder to a jar of smooth baby food, like bananas
- Peanut puffs
- Whole wheat infant cereal
- For older babies (10 months or older): scrambled eggs, small pieces of flaky fish
- Look for jarred or other premade infant foods that contain these common allergens

Talk to your doctor if your baby has food allergies or if you are unsure if your baby should be eating these common allergens.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.