

Let me sit at the table with my family.

Start giving me food you are eating that is safe for me. Be patient with me — I will be messy. I need practice to learn to eat. Please sit with me while I eat, and talk to me.



Start teaching me to drink from a small cup.

Be patient while I learn. As I start to eat more food, I will drink less breastmilk or formula. I will get better at using a cup. By around one year, I should be drinking just from a cup or the breast, not from a bottle. Please give me my cup just with meals and snacks.



Give me water, breastmilk or formula in my cup. I don't need to drink juice. If you do give me juice, only give me apple or grape—and no more than 2 ounces a day, mixed with water! Please don't give me any sweet drinks or soda. These drinks are bad for my teeth and they fill me up.

9 to 12 months

When I am ready, let me start feeding myself with a spoon or my hands.



Here are some good finger foods:

- small pieces of peeled soft fruits and soft cooked vegetables
- small pieces of cooked ground meat
- small pieces of dry cereal
- toasted bread squares, unsalted crackers, teething biscuits, small pieces of soft tortilla
- small slices of cheese
- cut-up noodles



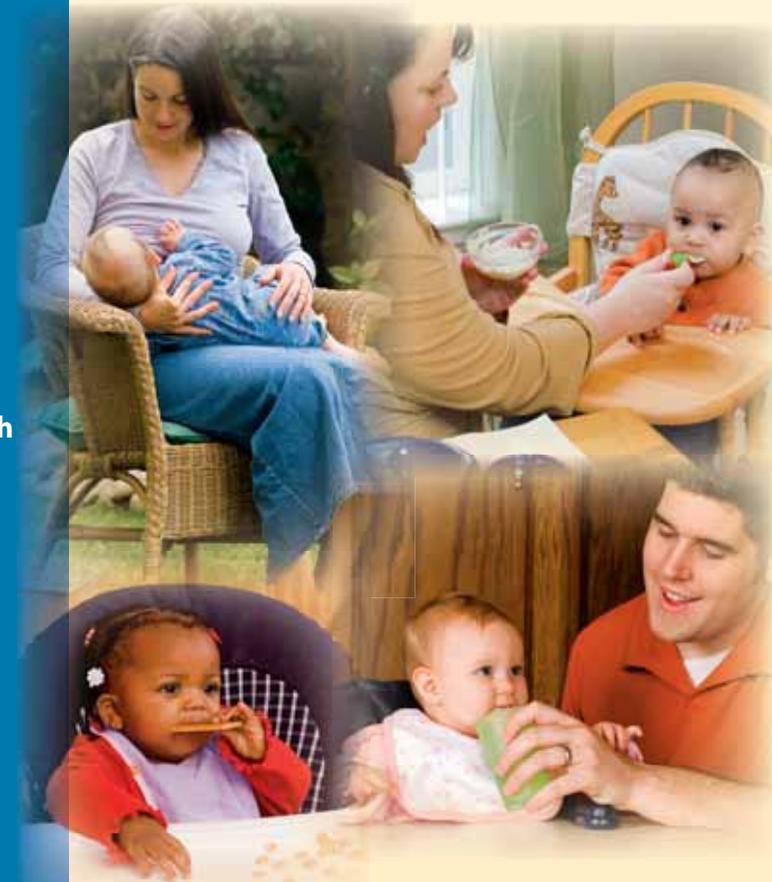
Keep me safe and healthy!

- Wash your hands and my hands before you give me food. Germs could make me sick.
- If you use a bottle to feed me, only put breastmilk or formula in it. If you feed me formula, mix it the way the can says.
- You can store bottles of breastmilk or formula in the refrigerator. Formula is safe for 24 hours, and breastmilk is safe for 5 days. You can also freeze breastmilk—ask WIC how.
- Throw away what is left in the bottle when I am done. It could make me sick if I drink it later.
- Feed me from a small dish, not from the baby food jar. Feed me with a small spoon. Use a clean spoon to take food out of the jar. Germs from my mouth can spoil the food and I could get diarrhea.
- Throw away any food left over in my dish when I am done. You can keep the jar in the refrigerator for 2 days after you open it.
- Don't feed me honey or foods made with honey. I could get serious food poisoning.
- Don't feed me any foods I could choke on. I might choke on hot dogs, nuts, seeds, popcorn, chips, grapes, raisins, raw vegetables, peanut butter, and candy.
- Please heat my bottle or jar of food in hot water, shake or stir it well, and test it before feeding me. If you heat my bottle or my food in the microwave oven, it can get too hot and burn my mouth.
- When my teeth start to come in, brush them with a small soft toothbrush twice a day. Put a tiny dot of fluoride toothpaste on the brush. Wipe off excess toothpaste until I learn how to spit it out. Ask my doctor if I need fluoride drops.



Feed Me! 6 to 12 Months

A helpful
guide to
feeding your
6 to 12 month
old baby.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
Developed by the WIC Supplemental Nutrition Program,
California Department of Public Health.
1-800-852-5770

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Kimberly Belshé, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency
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Around 6 months



Keep feeding me breastmilk or baby formula with iron.

It is still my main food. I need to breastfeed 6 times a day or more.

If I am drinking formula, I need you to feed me 4 times a day or more. My tummy can hold about 6 to 8 ounces at a time. If you're breastfeeding me, please continue until my first birthday or longer.

Let's cuddle while I eat. Even if I can hold my own bottle, I want to see your face. Don't prop up my bottle or put me in bed with it. I could choke or get tooth decay.

When I am about 6 months old, I am probably ready to try some solid foods. I need to be able to do all these things:

- sit up with support
- hold my head steady
- put my fingers or toys in my mouth
- show I want food by opening my mouth
- close my lips over the spoon
- show I don't want food by turning my head away
- keep food in my mouth and swallow it

If our family has food allergies or I was born early, talk to the doctor and WIC before you try feeding me other foods.



When I'm ready, try feeding me a little bit of solid food.

You can start with baby cereal with iron — try rice, oatmeal, or barley. Mix the cereal with breastmilk or formula — make it thin at first. When I get better at eating it, you can make it thicker.

Feed me my food with a baby spoon. Cereal in my bottle can make me gain too much weight — and I need to learn to use a spoon!

I need to sit up to eat. Hold the spoon near my mouth and wait for me to look at it. Then, put a little bit on my lips so I can taste it.

Be patient while I am learning to eat. If I won't eat baby cereal, wait a week and try again. I will do better when I am ready. Start feeding me baby cereal by about 7 months, unless my doctor says to wait.

6 to 9 months

I need to move through 4 stages of food:

- 1 Smooth (strained or pureed)
- 2 Mashed (smooth with a few tiny lumps)
- 3 Chopped (more lumps)
- 4 Tiny pieces of food



Be sure I can chew and swallow foods from one stage before I move to the next one.

I don't need teeth to eat soft foods. I use my gums and my tongue.

You can make my food.

You can use a strainer, blender, or baby food grinder. When I'm a little older, you can use a fork to mash my food. You can also buy baby food in jars, but that is more expensive.

Choose **healthy** foods. I need them to grow right. Help me learn to eat a variety of foods. Here are some good ones to start with:

- **Baby cereal:** rice, oatmeal, barley
- **Meats:** beef, chicken, turkey
- **Vegetables:** squash, peas, carrots, sweet potato
- **Fruit:** applesauce, bananas, pears
- **Other foods:** beans, egg yolk, tofu, cottage cheese, plain yogurt, rice, noodles

Wait until I am one year old to give me cow's milk or honey.

Keep my foods plain.

I don't need sugar, salt, spices, butter, fat, or gravy. If you buy baby food in a jar, choose **plain** vegetables, fruits, and meats. These are better for me than baby dinners or desserts.



Watch me for allergies.

If I'm allergic to something, I might get a skin rash, gas, or diarrhea, or I might have trouble breathing. **Stop** feeding me that food. Tell the doctor.

Give me only one new food at a time. Wait a few days before you try another new food. Take your time. That way you can see if I am allergic to anything.

Foods that babies are more likely to be allergic to are:

- cow's milk
- soy milk or tofu
- egg whites
- fish or other seafood
- wheat
- nuts
- corn



Most babies will outgrow these allergies.



I know when I am hungry.

I let you know by the way I act. Please feed me when I act hungry. I will open my mouth and be interested in food.

Wait until I open my mouth before you try to put food in. Wait until I am ready for each bite.



I know when I am full.

Let me eat until I show you I am full. When I turn my head away, that means I am done. Don't force me to finish my food or a bottle!

Give me a variety of foods.

Keep giving me new foods to try, so I will like lots of different foods. Keep trying — I might need to try a new food **about 10 times or more** before I decide I like it! I like to touch the food and smell it before I am ready to taste it.

Be patient with me. I will be messy. Let me touch my food. Please wait until I am done to clean me up.