

Feeding your Baby:

6 - 12 Months



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This handout provides information about feeding healthy full-term infants from age six to twelve months. Your baby needs healthy foods to grow and to develop properly. How your baby eats now will help build the foundation for healthy eating habits for life. Children and adults who eat well and are active are more likely to have better overall health and lower risk of developing certain diseases.

You will probably have many questions about feeding your baby. This handout provides answers to some of the questions you may have. For more information, contact your health care provider.

Please note: For simplicity, the baby is referred to as "she" in this booklet.

Why Wait Until Six Months to Start Solid Foods?

Breastmilk is the only food your baby needs for the first six months of life. If you have decided not to breastfeed, use a commercial cow milk-based infant formula, which is all your baby needs for the first six months.

At six months of age, breastmilk (or commercial cow milk-based infant formula) is still the main source of energy and nutrients for your baby. However, babies also need other foods to develop and grow properly. You can continue to breastfeed your baby up to two years of age and older, and you and your baby will continue to get the health benefits only breastfeeding can provide.

There is no benefit to offering solid foods before your baby is six months old. If your baby is hungrier, breastfeed more often (or if you are formula feeding, offer more formula). Offering solid foods before a baby is six months old is not helpful because:

- your baby is not ready to swallow and digest solid foods
- your baby's risk of being anemic (low iron) increases
- it does not help a baby sleep through the night
- your baby may drink less breastmilk. This means:
 - your baby will not be as well fed as when getting only breast milk
 - you may not breastfeed for as long as you planned. Then you and your baby will not get the protection provided by breastfeeding for a longer time.Breastfeeding protects babies against infection and allergies. Mothers who breastfeed have less risk of breast cancer and ovarian cancer.

Getting Started



How can you tell if your baby is ready for solid foods?
Look for these signs at six months old.

Your baby:

- can sit up and lean forward
- can hold her head up

When you try feeding, your baby:

- opens her mouth when food is offered
- picks up food and tries to put it in her mouth
- is able to take food from a spoon and swallow it
- can turn her head away to refuse food when she is full

Tips for Starting Solids

Keep in mind that it is your job to provide the right food for your baby. It is your baby's job to decide how much she eats. Help your baby become a successful eater by:

- continuing to breastfeed your baby whenever she is hungry
- offering solid foods at family mealtimes. Eating is more than just consuming food - the social part of eating is also important. Your baby will learn new eating skills best in a happy atmosphere, so try to make mealtimes pleasant and unhurried.
- setting a good example by what you eat - children are great imitators!
Children start to learn eating habits at an early age.

Keep Your Baby Safe

Keep hot tea, coffee, soup and other hot foods
out of your baby's reach.

Let Your Baby Explore New Foods in Her Own Way and Time

- Be patient with new foods. If your baby does not want to eat a food, wait a few days and try again. Sometimes a baby may need to be offered a food 20 or more times before she learns to like it.
- You can talk to your baby quietly while she eats. But avoid TV, music and toys at the table, which may distract your baby from eating.
- Let your baby take the lead with eating. Remember, it is your job to provide the food and it is her job to eat the food.
 - Let your baby open her mouth before you feed her.
 - Let your baby touch her food in the dish or on the spoon. Allow her to feed herself with her fingers as soon as she shows an interest. It's okay for her to be messy - that's how she learns to feed herself.
 - Feed your baby at her pace. Do not try to make her go slower or faster than she wants to go.
 - Stop feeding when your baby shows she has had enough. Do not force your baby to finish her food. A baby who is full will close her mouth, turn her head away, cover her mouth with her hand, shake her head "no", or cry.
 - Do not put any food into your baby's mouth without her permission. Avoid playing games which trick your baby into eating.



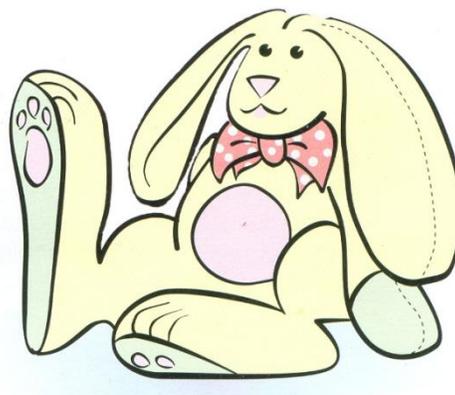
Will There Be Any Changes in My Baby's Bowel Habits?

Changes in bowel habits are normal when there is a change in a baby's food. You may notice a change in the colour, size and consistency of your baby's bowel movements. She may have bowel movements more or less often. If you have any questions, contact your health care provider.

Food Allergies

Offer only one new food at a time, at least three to four days apart, to help you see if your baby is allergic to any new food. The new food should be one single type of food, not a mixture of different foods.

When introducing a new food, it is important to look for signs of an allergy. Signs of an allergy can occur within a few minutes or a number of days after eating a certain food. Signs of an allergic reaction may include hives, swelling, wheezing, stuffy nose and itchy watery eyes, eczema, nausea, vomiting, cramping and diarrhea. If a baby shows any of these signs or any other reaction while eating or after eating a food, don't offer any more of the food you think caused the allergy until you can talk to your doctor.



Some allergies can cause an anaphylactic reaction. Signs of a severe anaphylactic reaction may include hives, swelling, difficulty swallowing or breathing, skin colour changes and dizziness/fainting. A baby may also pull or scratch at her tongue and talk or cry with a hoarser or squeakier voice. Get **immediate** medical attention if these severe signs occur.

Delaying the introduction of foods which commonly cause allergies is not currently recommended as a way to prevent food allergies, including for infants at risk for allergies. If there are allergies in your family, talk to your doctor for advice about introducing foods to your baby.

Solid Foods: Start at Six Months

Iron-rich foods should be the first foods you give to your baby. Meat and alternatives and iron-fortified infant cereals are iron-rich foods. See pages 10-12 for a description of those foods, and why iron is important.

What about textures?

Choosing the right texture of solid foods is important. Giving a baby texture that she is not ready for (too lumpy, hard or chewy) could cause choking. On the other hand, **feeding a baby soft food for too long may delay the development of chewing skills.** Start with soft foods. Change the texture of your baby's food as your baby develops. Do not worry about how many teeth your baby has before you introduce new textures. Babies do not need teeth to chew and eat soft foods. Introducing textures has more to do with a baby's development than the age of the baby or how many teeth she has. Be aware of the choking hazards outlined on pages 7 and 8.

Use the following table as a guide:

Baby's Development	Texture
Sits without help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• texture of infant cereals• if you use pureed foods, use only for the first few weeks• soft mashed or minced foods without lumps
Beginning to crawl	Change the textures of the food in the following order: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• soft mashed or minced foods with tiny soft lumps• foods with a soft texture, such as small pieces of soft fruit or hard-cooked egg• finger foods (see page 15)

What about amounts?

Breastmilk

Remember that breastmilk or commercial cow milk-based infant formula is still the main source of your baby's nutrition, even as you start to offer small amounts of new foods.



There is no set amount of food that your baby should eat. Start with a small amount, like a spoonful at a feeding, and according to your baby's appetite, offer more. Signs that your baby may want more food could include opening her mouth when she sees the food, moving her head towards the food and reaching towards the food. A baby who is full will close her mouth, turn her head away, cover her mouth with her hand, shake her head "no", or cry.

Introduce new foods separately. Once you've done that, you can begin to offer these foods at the same meal. When feeding more than one kind of food, do not let your baby fill up on one kind of food before you offer the next kind. Instead, offer a spoonful or two of one kind of food and then offer a spoonful or two of another kind of food. Keep repeating this pattern until your baby shows that she is full. This lets your baby decide how much of each food she wants to eat and lets her try all the foods you are providing.

Remember

These are general guidelines. No two babies are exactly alike. Don't compare your baby with others as to how much she eats, or when she accepts a new food.

Choking Hazards

Babies and children under four years of age are most at risk of choking on food because they do not chew as well as older children and adults. Some foods have a shape and size that can block the airway of a young child.

Choking can occur in children when they:

- Eat pieces of food that are too large
- Eat too fast
- Chew improperly
- Cry, laugh, run or jump around with food in their mouth

Your baby should always eat sitting upright. Stay with your baby while she is eating because a baby who is choking may not be able to make noise or attract attention. Coughing is a sign that a baby is removing the object naturally.

Remember

All foods can potentially cause choking. Certain foods can be especially hazardous for children under four years of age.

Do not serve the following to children under four years of age:

- **Foods that are hard, or hard to chew, such as:**
 - nuts, seeds, popcorn, raisins, corn, chips, candies (including marshmallows); also cough drops and gum
 - raw carrot sticks, raw celery, or other hard raw vegetables or fruits
Grate hard raw vegetables and fruits or soften them by cooking.
Remove tough skin (e.g. baked potato skin) before serving.
- **Foods that are round and/or a size that could block a child's airway, such as:**
 - whole grapes, and whole cherry or grape tomatoes
Cut these types of foods into quarters lengthwise and then into small pieces. If served, wieners and sausages also need to be cut into quarters lengthwise and then into small pieces. However, they are usually high in fat and sodium (salt) and should be avoided.

- **large chunks of food such as fruit and cheese, and especially chunks that are harder to chew, such as meat, poultry and some shellfish**
Cut large chunks of food into smaller pieces - this includes foods in mixed dishes such as soups, stews, casseroles and toppings on pizza.

- **Fish, meat and poultry with bones**

Carefully remove all bones from fish, meat and poultry before serving.

- **Foods on toothpicks or skewers**

- **Foods containing pits**

Remove pits or seeds from fruit (such as peaches, cherries, watermelon, oranges, apples, grapes, etc.) before serving.

- **Peanut butter or melted cheese in a lump (such as on a spoon)**

Spread peanut butter or melted cheese thinly on bread or crackers - never serve these foods alone in a lump, or too thick (e.g. on pizza), as they could get stuck in the throat and block air flow.

Preparing Family Food for Your Baby

Use Family Foods

- Take small portions of the healthy foods you are making for your family, and use these foods to make your baby's meal.
- Choose foods which are appropriate for your baby (see pages 10-18).
- Choose a variety of foods, so your baby can learn to enjoy many different tastes. Your baby may even like foods you don't.
- Do not add salt, seasonings or sauces and condiments that contain salt (such as dry soup mix, garlic salt, soya sauce, and ketchup), strong spices such as curry or chili powder, butter, oil, margarine, sugar or sweeteners, until your baby's portion has been taken out. Once your baby is used to the taste of the food, you can add the spices which you add to your family's food.

Food Safety

- Wash your hands before preparing food and during food preparation. Washing hands is especially important if you have touched raw meat, poultry or fish.
- Use clean utensils and dishes. When cooking, don't put the tasting spoon back in the food. This keeps bacteria from your mouth from getting into the food.
- Wash your hands and your baby's hands before each feeding or meal.
- When your baby is finished eating, throw away any leftover food which is in your baby's dish or on the high chair tray. This helps to keep your baby's food safe.
- See pages 21 and 22 for information on refrigerating, freezing, thawing and reheating foods.

Preparing and Serving the Food

- Use a knife and fork, food processor, food mill or potato masher to create the right texture. Moisten food with liquid as needed. For the liquid, you can use breastmilk, commercial cow milk-based infant formula, or water.

At Six Months – Start with Iron-rich Foods

Iron-rich foods should be the first foods you give to your baby. Most healthy full-term babies are born with enough iron in their body to last until they are about six months old. At that age, they need iron-rich foods. Iron is important for continued healthy growth and brain development. Recommended iron-rich foods include meat and alternatives (see section below for details), and iron-fortified infant cereals (see page 12).

Offer your baby iron-rich foods two or more times each day. This should include at least one food from meat and alternatives each day.

Breastmilk or commercial cow milk-based infant formula continues to be the main source of energy and nutrients for your baby as other foods are introduced.

Meat and Alternatives

Meat, poultry, fish and alternatives are good sources of iron and protein.

- Introduce one meat or alternative at a time.
- Wait three to four days before you introduce another new food.

What kind of meat and alternatives should I offer my baby?

- Beef, pork, veal, lamb, chicken, turkey, fish and shellfish.
- Game such as moose, caribou, rabbit and partridge. For babies and everyone else in the family, do not serve the liver or kidneys of moose or caribou, as they are too high in cadmium.
- Meat alternatives such as tofu and eggs. (2012 Health Canada recommendations say that you can give your baby whole eggs, not just egg yolks, at six months.)
- Meat alternatives such as well-cooked legumes (split peas and other dried peas, beans such as kidney beans, and lentils). If you use canned legumes, rinse them before you mash them. This helps wash away some of the sodium (salt).
- Do not give your baby processed meats such as bacon, wieners, salami, pepperoni, bologna, sausages, and potted or canned meats because they are high in salt and/or fat.
- Do not give your baby pre-packaged sliced lean deli meats such as ham, turkey, chicken or beef, or salt meat or salt fish, because these foods are high in salt.



How do I prepare meat and alternatives?

- Do not add salt, seasonings or sauces and condiments that contain salt (such as dry soup mix, garlic salt, soya sauce, and ketchup), or strong spices such as curry and chili powder, until your baby's portion has been taken out.
- Choose lean cuts and trim the fat before cooking. Take the skin off poultry.
- Remove bones before cooking or choose pieces of meat away from the bone.
- Roast, bake, broil, boil or stew meat, poultry and fish. Cook meat, poultry and fish thoroughly.
- Mince cooked meat, poultry or fish finely with a knife, food mill or small food processor. Use a fork to mash foods such as well-cooked legumes, tofu or hard-cooked eggs. Moisten food with liquid as needed. For the liquid, you can use breastmilk, commercial cow milk-based infant formula, or water. Increase the texture of the food over time. See page 5 for more information.
- See pages 21 and 22 for information on refrigerating, freezing, thawing and reheating foods.



What about peanut butter and nuts?

Peanut butter can be given once grain products are introduced. Peanut butter should never be given alone, such as on a spoon. Peanut butter is a choking hazard if it is given alone or if it is spread thickly on another food, such as bread or crackers. To serve peanut butter safely to a baby, the peanut butter should be spread **thinly** on bread or crackers. Nuts should be avoided until your child is at least four years old (see pages 7 and 8 for information on choking hazards).

If there are allergies in your family, speak with your doctor before you give your child these foods.

What about mercury and fish?

Fish is a healthy part of your baby's diet and an important food for growth and development. But some fish have high mercury levels which can be unhealthy for your baby. Health Canada provides advice for limiting exposure to mercury from certain types of fish. Refer to www.healthcanada.gc.ca and search for *mercury in fish* to find the 2011 document "Mercury in Fish - Questions and Answers", for the latest information.

Infant Cereals

Iron-fortified infant cereals are an important source of iron starting at six months of age.

- Introduce one type of infant cereal at a time.
- Wait three to four days before you introduce another new food.

What kind of infant cereals should I offer my baby?

- Choose plain iron-fortified **infant** cereal, not regular cereal.
- Start with infant rice cereal. Next, offer other single grains such as oatmeal, barley and wheat infant cereal. After your baby has had the single grains, you can offer a mixed grain infant cereal.
- Some infant cereals contain added fruit and vegetables. Your baby does not need these types of cereals. If you do choose to give your baby these cereals, you should wait until you have introduced separately all the fruits or vegetables in the cereal.

Did you know?

- Some infant cereals contain cow's milk.
- If you are breastfeeding and do not want to offer cow's milk, look for cereals that do not have added dry skim milk or whole milk powder.

How do I make infant cereal?

- Follow package directions for mixing.
- Do not add sugar or sweeteners to the cereal.

How do I offer infant cereal to my baby?

- Always offer cereal from a spoon.
- Never put cereal in a bottle. This can cause choking.



When do I offer meat and alternatives or infant cereal to my baby?

- Offer your baby these iron-rich foods two or more times each day. This should include at least one food from meat and alternatives each day.

Vegetables and Fruit

Vegetables and fruit can be introduced once meat and alternatives and infant cereal have been introduced. Vegetables and fruit have vitamins, minerals and fibre, and add new tastes and textures for your baby.

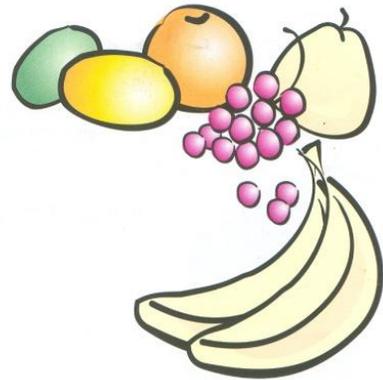


How do I prepare and introduce vegetables?

- Do not add salt, seasonings that contain salt, sauces, strong spices such as curry or chili powder, butter, oil, margarine, sugar or sweeteners, until your baby's portion has been taken out.
- Use plain fresh or frozen vegetables. Wash fresh vegetables before you prepare them.
- You can use canned vegetables, but they contain more sodium (salt) than fresh or frozen. If you use them, rinse them before you mash them. This helps wash away some of the sodium. Use "no salt added" or "less sodium" canned vegetables when available.
- Cook fresh or frozen vegetables until just tender. Don't overcook them.
- Baking, steaming or microwaving retains the most nutrients. If you boil vegetables, use as little water as possible.
- Choose a variety such as carrots, turnip, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, peas, squash, parsnip, sweet potato, green or yellow beans and cabbage.
- Vegetables do not need to be pureed. Babies six months of age and older can eat mashed cooked vegetables.
- Introduce one new vegetable at a time.
- Wait three to four days before introducing another new food.
- Offer each vegetable separately. Do not mix them. Let your baby learn the taste of each vegetable.

How do I prepare and introduce fruit?

- Use fresh ripe fruit (including berries), plain unsweetened frozen fruit, or canned fruit (packed in water or juice, not in syrup).
- Fruit does not need to be pureed. Babies six months of age and older can eat soft mashed fruit.
- Cook hard fruit (until just tender) before mashing it.
- When using fresh fruit, wash it and remove skin, pits and large seeds before cooking.
- Babies do not need sugar sprinkled on fruit.
- Introduce one new fruit at a time.
- Wait three to four days before introducing another new food.
- Offer each fruit separately. Do not mix them. Let your baby learn the taste of each fruit.



What about juice?

Babies do not need juice. They get all the fluid they need from breastmilk or commercial cow milk-based infant formula, and a small amount of water (see last bullet in the list). Juice is a nutritious food, but it does not have fibre as fruit does. So fruit is a better choice. If choosing juice, you should:

- Choose only 100% unsweetened fruit juice or reduced sodium (salt) vegetable juice. You do not need to dilute juice or buy special baby juice.
- Give your baby no more than 2 oz (60 mL) of juice a day. Too much juice will fill your baby up.
- Serve juice in a cup, not a bottle. Your baby may keep the bottle in her mouth for too long which can cause tooth decay.
- Do not give your baby fruit drinks or pop because they are not good sources of nutrients. Products labeled as fruit beverages, fruit drinks, fruit crystals, fruit "ades", fruit cocktails or fruit punches are **not** 100% unsweetened fruit juices.
- You can give your baby water to quench her thirst once she is six months old. Give your baby no more than 2 oz (60 mL) of water at one time and no more than 4 oz (125 mL) of water a day. Too much water will fill your baby up. See pages 24 and 25 for more information about water.

Finger Foods



Most babies enjoy eating with their hands. It is part of how they learn about new foods - how they look, feel, smell and taste.

A finger food is any small piece of food that can be picked up and brought to the mouth using fingers. Offering finger foods helps babies learn to chew and feed themselves.

Your baby is ready for finger foods when she:

- is beginning to crawl
- is grabbing the spoon
- is able to hold food in her hand and bring it to her mouth

What are some examples of finger foods to give to my baby?

- Cooked tender meat, cut up finely or minced
- Cooked beans and other legumes
- Cooked vegetables, cut into very small pieces or strips
- Soft, ripe, peeled fruit cut into very small pieces or strips (e.g. bananas, pears, peaches, plums, cantaloupe or kiwi).
- Grapes and strawberries (or other large berries) do not have to be peeled, but should be cut into quarters lengthwise and then into very small pieces.
- Dry toast strips, bread crusts and unsalted crackers
- Unsweetened cereals
- Cut-up cooked pasta
- Hard cheese, grated or cut into very small pieces

Choking Hazards

See pages 7 and 8 for information on choking hazards.

Introducing Other Solid Foods: Start Around Nine Months

To help your baby eat a variety of foods, you should begin introducing other types of foods, such as grain products in addition to infant cereal. Some babies may be ready for grain products before nine months. See the information about textures on page 5.

Grain Products

Grain products contain fibre, vitamins and minerals and are a good source of energy. Iron-fortified infant cereal is a grain product which is started at six months of age. Other grain products can be started later. Examples of grain products include bread, unsweetened regular cereals, crackers (unsalted tops), pasta and rice.

- Choose **whole grain** products at least half of the time.
- Choose brown rice more often than white rice.
- Choose unsweetened whole grain cereals as finger foods. Continue to offer iron-fortified infant cereals.
- Check the ingredients of the grain product. If one of the ingredients is a new grain for your baby, start with a small amount of the grain product. Wait three to four days before you add another new food.

Milk and Alternatives – Wait until at least Nine Months

Small amounts of milk and alternatives provide new tastes and textures, but should **not** replace breastmilk, which continues to be a main source of energy and nutrients for your baby at this age.

Milk and foods made with milk, such as yogurt and cheeses, are typically high in protein and calcium. Milk is also a good source of vitamin D. You can begin including milk and alternatives once your baby is eating a variety of meat and alternatives, infant cereals, other grain products, vegetables, and fruits.

Milk

- Whole cow's milk (3.25% MF) can be given to your baby when she is 9 to 12 months old, as long as she is eating a variety of solid foods.
- Mothers who breastfeed may choose to wait longer than 9 to 12 months of age before introducing cow's milk.



- Breastfeeding has many benefits and cow's milk should not replace breastmilk. The number of times a day you breastfeed should not decrease when cow's milk is introduced.
- Introduce whole cow's milk gradually. For formula-fed babies, the change from commercial cow milk-based infant formula to whole cow's milk can be completed by around one year of age. At this time, a formula-fed baby should be eating a variety of healthy foods, including two cups of milk a day to help meet her vitamin D needs. For information about vitamin D needs for breastfed babies, see page 24.
- Continue to give your child whole milk until she is at least two years old. Do not give her 2%, 1%, .5% or skim milk.
- **Soy beverage, rice beverage or other vegetarian drinks (even if they are fortified) should not replace breastmilk, commercial infant formula, or whole milk in the first two years.** These beverages do not contain enough protein or calories to help your baby grow.

Yogurt

- Give plain, unsweetened yogurt.
- Do not give your baby yogurt containing honey, or artificial sweeteners such as sucralose or aspartame.

Cheese

- Choose hard cheeses such as swiss, mozzarella or cheddar.
- Hard cheeses can be grated or cut into very small pieces. See pages 7-8 for information on choking hazards.
- Do not give your baby processed cheese slices and spreads because they have more sodium (salt).

Foods to Avoid

See pages 7 and 8 for information on choking hazards.

There are some foods which should not be given to babies during the first year including:

- honey (It can make your baby very sick with botulism, a type of food poisoning. Honey is safe for people over one year of age.)
- candies and chocolate
- soft drinks (pop), fruit drinks, sport drinks
- tea, coffee, herbal teas
- salt
- pickles
- foods and beverages with artificial sweeteners
- fried and deep-fried foods
- high fat snack foods (e.g. cheese-flavoured snacks, corn chips, potato chips)
- processed meats such as ham, bacon, wieners, salami, pepperoni, bologna, and sausages
- salt meat and salt fish
- sweets
- ice cream
- cake, cookies
- sugar-coated cereals
- jelly/gelatin desserts
- gravy



Solids Feeding Guide

Solid foods should add to, not replace, breastmilk or commercial cow milk-based infant formula, which contain more complete nutrition for young babies. Let your baby's appetite guide how much food you provide.

Age	Foods	Comments
Birth	Breastmilk or commercial cow milk-based infant formula	Amount varies depending on age and baby's appetite. See <i>Breastfeeding Handbook</i> or <i>Infant Formula Feeding</i> booklets for more information (available from your health care provider).
Six to Eight Months Continue with breastfeeding or commercial cow milk-based infant formula according to your baby's cues (not on a schedule). Feed solid foods two to three times per day. This includes offering your baby iron-rich foods two or more times each day. This should include at least one food from meat and alternatives each day.	Iron-rich Foods: Meat and Alternatives Minced cooked meat, fish, poultry or game; mashed cooked meat alternatives (beans, peas, lentils, eggs, and tofu). Moisten food with liquid as needed. For the liquid, you can use breastmilk, commercial cow milk-based infant formula, or water. Iron-fortified infant cereal Introduce one type of grain at a time. Start with rice; then try other single grains such as oatmeal, barley and wheat. If these infant cereals are tolerated, add a mixed grain infant cereal.	Iron-rich Foods: Meat and Alternatives Start with a small amount, like a spoonful at a feeding, and according to your baby's appetite, offer more. Try one new meat or alternative at a time. Wait 3 to 4 days before you try another new food. Iron-fortified infant cereal Start with a small amount, like a spoonful at a feeding, and according to your baby's appetite, offer more. Try one new cereal at a time. Wait 3 to 4 days before you try another new food.
	Vegetables and Fruit See page 5 for information on changing the texture of vegetables and fruit. See pages 7 and 8 for information on choking hazards.	Vegetables and Fruit Start with a small amount, like a spoonful at a feeding, and according to your baby's appetite, offer more. Try one new vegetable or fruit at a time. Wait 3 to 4 days before you try another new food.

Age	Food	Comments
<p>Around Nine to Twelve Months Continue with breastfeeding or commercial cow milk-based infant formula according to your baby's cues (not on a schedule).</p> <p>Wait 3-4 days between the introduction of each new food.</p> <p>Feed solid foods 3 times per day at family mealtimes, plus 1-3 snacks per day.</p>	<p>Grain Products Bread, pasta, crackers (unsalted tops) and rice</p> <p>Whole grain unsweetened cereals as finger foods. These cereals do not replace infant cereal.</p>	<p>Meat and Alternatives: Continue to provide in amounts according to your baby's appetite.</p> <p>Iron-fortified infant cereal: Continue to provide in amounts according to your baby's appetite.</p> <p>Vegetables and Fruit: Continue to provide in amounts according to your baby's appetite.</p> <p>Grain Products: Introduce different grain products in small amounts, such as a spoonful of cooked rice or cooked cut-up pasta, a very small piece of bread or a small cracker. Continue to offer in amounts according to your baby's appetite.</p>
	<p>Milk and Alternatives</p> <p>Whole cow's milk (3.25% MF)</p> <p>Plain hard cheeses and unsweetened yogurt</p>	<p>Whole milk can be introduced at 9 months once your baby is eating a variety of foods from Meat and Alternatives, Grain Products, and Vegetables and Fruit.</p> <p>Introduce small amounts of cheese and yogurt, such as a spoonful. Continue to offer in amounts according to your baby's appetite.</p>
<p>One year of age Breastfeeding can be continued until two years of age or longer.</p> <p>Offer 3 meals and 2-3 nutritious snacks per day.</p>	<p>A variety of foods from the four groups of Canada's Food Guide.</p>	<p>Continue to give whole milk until your baby is two years old.</p> <p>Continue to provide healthy foods, in amounts according to your baby's appetite.</p> <p>Contact your public health nurse or health care provider for a copy of <i>Healthy Eating for Your Toddler Age 12-24 Months</i>.</p>

Family Food for Your Baby

- Is cheaper than commercial bottled baby food.
- Allows you to control the texture as you do the mashing and chopping.
- Allows a greater variety of choices.
- May increase your baby's acceptance of new textures because the flavour stays the same as the texture changes.
- Helps your baby get used to the foods your family eats.

See pages 9-18 for more information about choosing and preparing food for your baby.

Keeping Family Food Safe for Your Baby

In the Refrigerator

- Refrigerate food after you cook it, unless you are serving it right away.
- Do not store food in the refrigerator for more than two to three days.
- Store food in a tightly covered container.

In the Freezer

- Spoon prepared food in small portions on a freezer-safe plate or baking dish or into a clean ice cube tray, and cover. Place in freezer.
- Once the food is frozen, put in freezer bags and remove air from the bags with a straw. Seal the bags and make sure to label them with the type of food and the date it was prepared. Never freeze the food in glass containers unless the glass container is specifically labeled for freezing.
- The food can be stored in the freezer for up to two months. However, two months later, your baby will likely be eating foods with more texture. So, you will not need to freeze a large amount of food for your baby. Never refreeze food once it has been thawed.

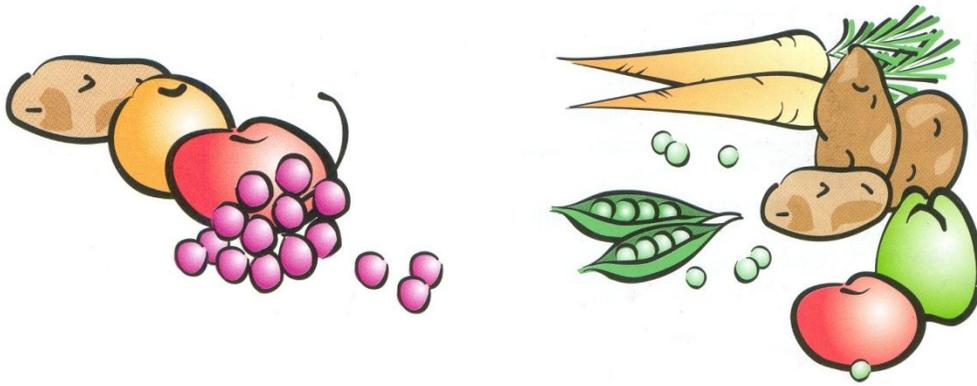
How do I thaw and reheat frozen food?

- There are three recommended ways:
 1. In a microwave, use a glass bowl/container. When using a microwave oven, the food might get hot spots which can burn your baby's mouth and throat. To prevent your baby from getting burned, stir food thoroughly to make sure that food reaches an even temperature throughout. Taste the food to make sure it is not too hot. Do not put the tasting spoon back into the food.
 2. Put the food in a small bowl, then place the bowl in a larger bowl filled with hot water, or in a pan of warm water on the stove.
 3. Thaw the food in the refrigerator overnight if you wish. Never thaw your baby's food on your kitchen counter. Bacteria may grow in the food at room temperature and make your baby sick.
- Heat only one meal portion at a time.
- Do not save leftovers for another meal.
- Do not refreeze food.

Commercial Bottled Baby Food

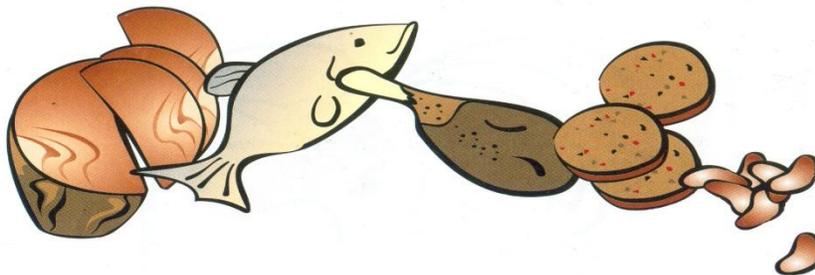
Texture

Most commercial bottled baby foods have a pureed texture. So if you use them at all, it should be only for the first few weeks. Then move on to mashed or minced family foods for your baby.



Tips and cautions about the use of commercial bottled baby foods:

- Read labels - ingredients are listed in order of quantity. The ingredient listed first is present in the largest amount.
- Choose foods without sugar, fat and salt on the ingredient list.
- Choose separate bottles of meats and vegetables, not combination dinners which may have fillers and be less nutritious.
- Serving meats and vegetables separately lets your baby learn to like different flavours and textures.
- Do not serve fruit products that are labeled "dessert", because they have added sugar.
- Do not serve custards, because they have added sugar.
- Check the expiry date on the bottle. Do not use food past this date.
- Do not feed your baby directly from the bottle. Put a portion in a small bowl or plate so you are not putting bacteria from your baby's mouth into the bottle while feeding.
- Keep your baby's food safe. Opened bottles of meat and poultry baby food should be stored (lids on) in the refrigerator and thrown away if not used within two days. Opened bottles of vegetables and fruit should be stored (lids on) in the refrigerator and thrown away if not used within three days.



Common Questions

Does my baby need to take vitamins?

Babies who are being breastfed during the first year should receive a daily supplement of 400 IU of vitamin D until one year of age or until breastfeeding is stopped. Babies who are being breastfed after one year of age should receive a daily supplement of 200 IU of vitamin D, unless they are getting that amount of vitamin D from food. Healthy eating, including two cups of milk a day, provides about 200 IU of vitamin D.

You can buy vitamin D drops at drug stores or at stores that have a pharmacy. The vitamin D drops should be placed directly in the baby's mouth.

Breastfed babies do not need any other vitamins or minerals.

Babies fed commercial cow milk-based infant formula do not need any vitamin or mineral supplements.

Vitamins or minerals should only be given to a baby if prescribed by a doctor for special needs.

Does my baby need fluoride drops?

Fluoride drops are not recommended for babies less than six months of age. Some babies may need fluoride drops after six months of age. Fluoride drops should only be given to a baby upon the advice of a dental care provider.

What about water?

Babies who are less than six months of age do not need water to quench their thirst. Giving water during the first six months may affect a baby's growth as it may reduce her intake of breastmilk or commercial cow milk-based infant formula.

Water is a good choice for older babies. Give your baby no more than 2 oz (60 mL) of water at one time and no more than 4 oz (125 mL) of water a day. Too much water will fill your baby up.

Use water from the cold water tap. Water from the hot water tap may have higher amounts of lead than water from the cold water tap. Lead and copper from the pipes is not healthy for your baby. Let the water run from the cold water tap for

two minutes each morning to flush out any overnight build-up of lead and copper in the water from the pipes. The only bottled waters suitable for babies are non-carbonated natural spring water from underground springs and non-carbonated treated water with a low mineral content. Bottled water should have less than 500 ppm or mg/L of total dissolved solids. **Note:** natural spring water which is not commercially bottled and has not been tested for safety should not be used.

Health Canada recommends caution when using home water treatment equipment. Some water softeners increase the sodium content of the water, and charcoal filters can increase the silver content of water or may contaminate the water with bacteria.

Health Canada also recommends caution when using well water for infant feeding (birth to 24 months). Well water may naturally contain high amounts of nitrates, nitrites, arsenic, fluoride, or other heavy metals. If you are using private well water for your baby, the water should be tested at least twice a year for these substances. Well water should also be tested for coliform bacteria. Contact your nearest Government Service Centre for information on free testing for bacteria. They can also direct you to laboratories where you can pay for testing for the other substances.

What about teething?

- Don't worry if teething upsets your baby's appetite. It should return to normal when the tooth comes through.
- Give your baby a teething ring or bread crusts - not teething biscuits that contain sugar and crumble easily (which may cause choking).

How do I keep my baby's teeth healthy?

- If your baby uses a pacifier, do not dip it in anything sweet as this may cause tooth decay.
- Never put your baby to bed with a bottle of milk, juice or any sweet liquid. This practice promotes tooth decay and is a choking hazard.
- Ask your public health nurse or dental care provider for information about the proper way to clean your baby's teeth.

Additional Information

Giving your baby the gift of healthy eating habits is a wonderful thing to do. Remember, support and information is available from public health nurses, dietitians, doctors and other health care providers. Some public health nurses, Healthy Baby Clubs and Family Resource Centres offer information sessions about feeding babies. You can also check out the following websites.

Baby-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador
www.babyfriendlynl.ca

Safe Food Handling for Children Ages 5 & Under
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/kitchen-cuisine/children-enfants-eng.php

Mercury in Fish - Questions and Answers
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/chem-chim/envIRON/mercur/merc_fish_qa-poisson_qr-eng.php



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