



What you need to know about Feeding your 6-month-old

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR BABY'S 6-MONTH VISIT:

- How should I start feeding my baby solids?
- Is my baby eating enough?
- Should my baby be drinking anything other than breastmilk or formula?

1 EXPLORE SOLID FOODS.

You may have been helping your baby explore solid foods, or you may just be getting started now. Either way, feeding your baby solids is an exciting—and messy—milestone!

What you need to know before exploring solid foods:

START with iron-rich foods, such as iron-fortified cereal or pureed meat.

NEXT, add single pureed veggies, such as green peas or carrots.

ADD single pureed fruits last. Babies naturally like sweet flavors.

- If your baby refuses to eat a food the first time you offer it, don't worry. Wait a few days and try the food again. Some babies need to be offered a new food 15 to 20 times before they will accept it.
- Babies make faces when they're trying new tastes and textures, but this does not mean they dislike a particular food. Offering your baby new foods over and over again will help him enjoy a variety of healthy foods with different flavors.

Is your baby getting enough nutrition?

- Your baby is exploring solid foods, but breastmilk or iron-fortified formula will still provide most of his nutrition and fluid needs.
- Your baby will naturally drink less as he eats more solid foods.
- Babies use hunger and fullness cues to let us know what they need, but they need your attention to show you. Make it easier to recognize your baby's cues by turning off the electronics (such as the TV, computer and cellphone) and putting away the toys.

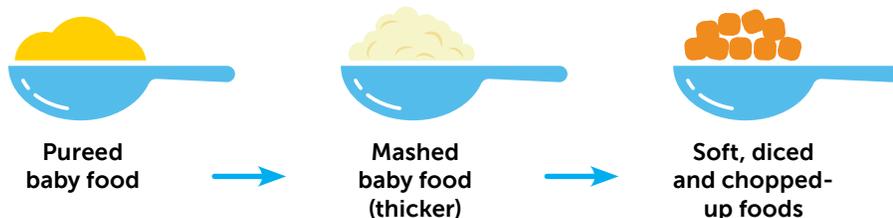
Did you know?



Giving your baby a bottle to go to bed teaches him to use food to fall asleep, and it can cause tooth decay.

2 TRANSITION YOUR BABY'S FOODS.

As your baby continues to grow and develop over the next three months, it is important to start transitioning your baby's foods to explore different textures and flavors.



Did you know?



Now is a great time to start helping your baby learn to drink from a cup, starting with a few sips of water.

3 WATCH FOR SIGNS THAT YOUR BABY IS READY TO FEED HIMSELF.

Your baby may start to show signs that he is ready to feed himself. Self-feeding allows him to respond to his hunger and fullness cues, and it builds the foundation for future healthy eating.

Signs that your baby may be ready to feed himself:

- He's starting to pick up food with his fingers. Using his fingers to eat will help your baby start to learn the skills he needs to start using a spoon.
- He's trying to grab the spoon and put it in his mouth.

Encourage your baby to feed himself by providing soft finger foods, such as soft-cooked carrots and peas.

No juice zone

- Fruit juice—even 100%—has a lot of sugar and can cause diarrhea, diaper rash and tooth decay.
- Your baby's bottle or cup should not be filled with fruit juice, even if it is watered down.

What to expect next:

- Over the next three months, begin offering your baby solid foods with more texture and encouraging your baby to feed himself with soft finger foods.
- Continue to provide meals in a calm, distraction-free setting, and trust your baby's hunger and fullness cues.
- Mealtime may get messy, but that's OK! It's a natural part of your baby learning how to eat solid foods.

Doctor's notes: