

Healthy Eating for Infants



Why Is This Important?

- Babies who are breastfed for at least 6 months are more likely to have a healthy weight as they grow up.
- Mothers often report that breastfeeding is harder than they thought; moms may be more likely to stop breastfeeding if they feel unsupported and have nowhere to turn for help.
- Parents, for many reasons, may choose not to breastfeed. These parents have questions and need support to feed their infants in a healthy and safe way, too.
- When babies are fussy, it doesn't always mean they are hungry. Using a bottle or breastfeeding to soothe infants can contribute to overfeeding.
- Babies should be ready to start eating simple solids around 6 months. Babies who start eating solid foods too early are more likely to have weight problems as children and adults.

Talking About Breastfeeding

- If breastfeeding is harder than you thought it would be you are not alone!
- Lots of people say that breastfeeding just comes “naturally” but for many moms, it doesn't.
- Going back to work and wanting to get back into a normal family routine can make it hard to stick with breastfeeding. Using a breast pump can help ensure your baby still gets the best nutrition.
- If you need support or help at any time while you are breastfeeding, talk to us or call 1-800-994-9662 (the National Breastfeeding Hotline) for free breastfeeding support.

Talking Points About Bottle Feeding

- Don't use pillows or other objects to hold a bottle for your baby. This makes it hard for her to spit out the bottle when she's done—it can cause her to keep eating after she's full.
- Make sure you take the bottle away if your baby falls asleep. If you let the baby keep the bottle in her mouth when she's sleeping, formula can stay in her mouth and can damage her teeth or cause her to choke.
- Stick with ONLY breast milk or formula for feeding your baby until she is 6 months old. Unless your doctor tells you something different, adding cereal to baby's bottle adds extra calories to her diet that she doesn't need.

Talking Points About Starting Solids

- If your baby is around 6 months old, it's time to start simple solids like rice cereal.
- After cereal, move on to vegetables and meats first. That way your baby will learn to like those flavors before he gets used to the sweet flavors of fruit.
- Start with small serving sizes—just 1–2 small spoonfuls at a time. Don't make your baby eat if he's not hungry. If he leans back or turns away, he is full. Let your baby have at least 2–3 days to get used to a new food before introducing something else.