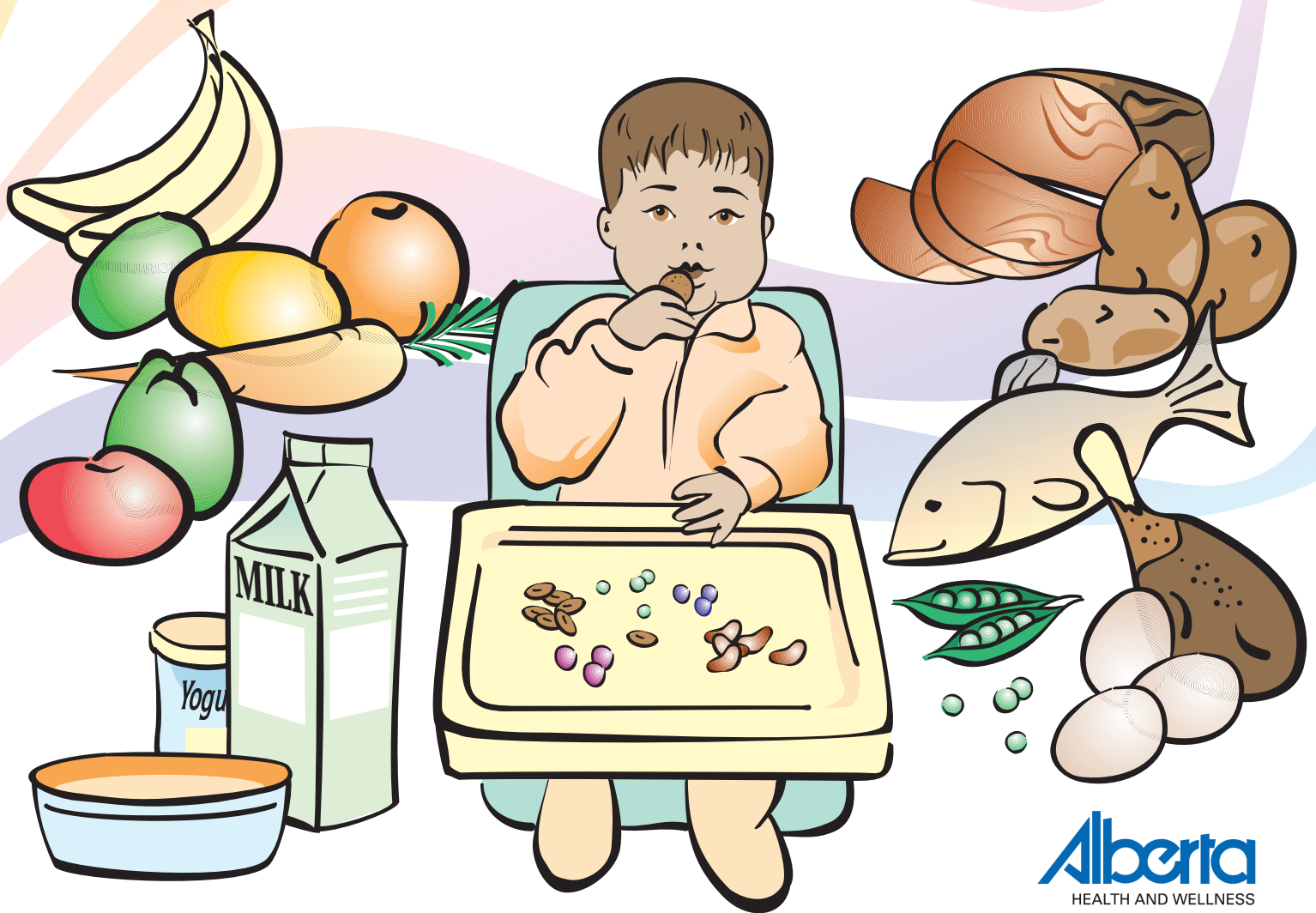


Feeding Baby Solid Foods



Remember..

Parents are responsible for what their child is given to eat.
The child then chooses how much to eat.

Help baby be successful when eating:

- ✿ Choose foods that suit baby's abilities and age.
- ✿ Feed baby whenever baby is hungry.
- ✿ Make sure baby is sitting up straight and is facing forward. A highchair is best. Baby is able to explore foods better and is less likely to choke.
- ✿ Never leave baby alone when eating.
- ✿ Talk to baby quietly and encourage baby to eat. Try not to overwhelm baby with attention.
- ✿ Include baby in the family mealtime routine. Feed baby while family members are eating.

Allow baby to take the lead when eating:

- ✿ Wait for baby to open mouth when food is offered.
- ✿ Let baby touch food in the dish or on the spoon. Allow baby to feed self with fingers as soon as baby shows an interest.
- ✿ Let baby eat at own pace. Do not try to feed baby faster or slower.
- ✿ Stop feeding when baby has had enough. Do not force baby to empty a bottle or finish food.
- ✿ Be patient. Do not force new foods. If baby turns new food down, wait a few days and try again.
- ✿ Have fun!

What do you need to know before starting baby on solid foods?

- ✦ There is no need to rush solid foods.
- ✦ For 4 to 6 months after birth, breast milk or formula with iron is all baby needs.

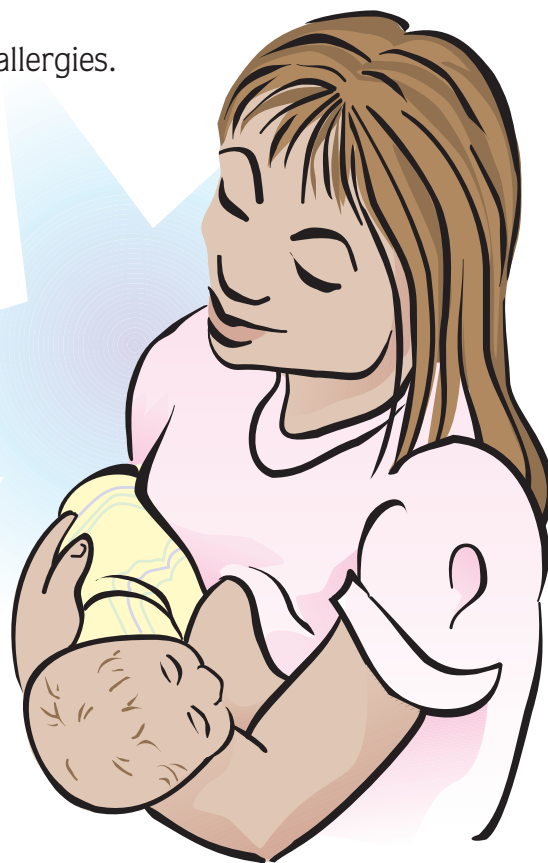
Wait until baby is 4 to 6 months before giving solid foods. Giving baby solid foods before 4 to 6 months can cause problems because:

- ✦ baby may drink less breast milk or formula. This is what babies need most to grow and develop.
- ✦ baby's stomach is not ready to digest solid foods.
- ✦ it may increase baby's chance of developing food allergies.
- ✦ baby may not be ready to swallow solid foods and might choke.

... studies show solid foods will not help baby sleep through the night!

NOTE: If your family has a history of allergies, speak with your health care provider * for guidelines on the introduction of solids.

*Health Care Provider refers to your physician, community health nurse, registered nutritionist, registered dietitian, lactation consultant or midwife.

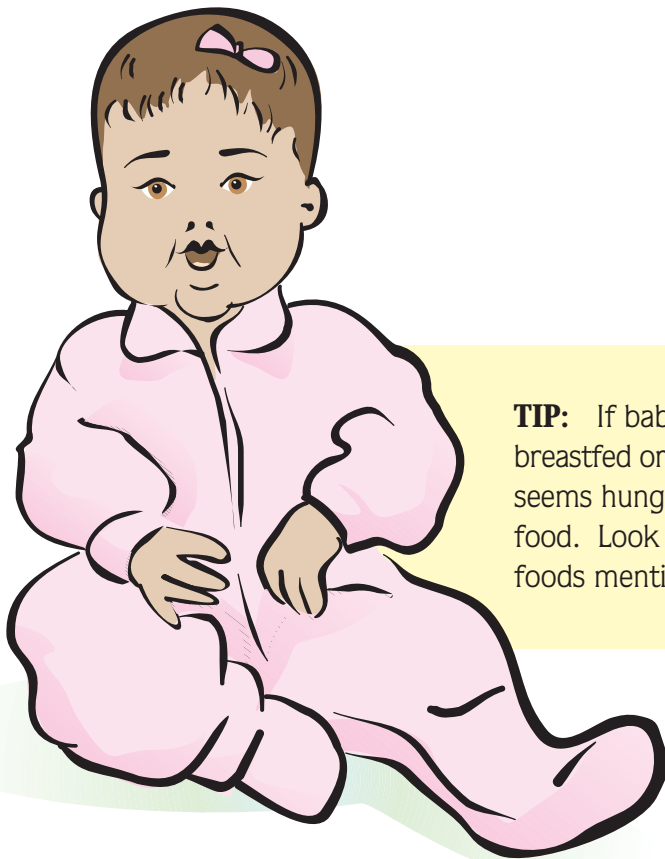


How do you know if baby is ready for solid foods?

Look for these signs ...

Baby:

- is between 4 to 6 months old.
- can sit up with very little help.
- can hold head up.
- opens mouth when food is offered.
- is able to take food from a spoon.
- can turn head to accept or refuse food.



TIP: If baby is over 4 months old, is being breastfed or given formula on demand and still seems hungry, baby may be ready to try solid food. Look for the signs of readiness for solid foods mentioned above.



Baby's first solid food: Infant Cereal

4 to 6 Months

What kind of cereals should I feed baby?

- Choose plain infant cereal with iron, not adult cereal.
- Start with infant rice cereal. Next, offer barley, oatmeal, and then wheat cereal. If these cereals are tolerated, add a mixed grain infant cereal.
- Avoid infant cereal with added fruits and vegetables.
- Use only one kind of cereal for 3-5 days before trying a different kind of cereal. This way you can watch for signs of an allergy like a rash, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain or breathing problems.

How to make infant cereal.

- Read the label on the cereal box carefully. Some brands of cereal have added formula and some do not. Follow directions for mixing.
- Mix dry cereal with recommended liquid (breast milk, infant formula, or water) to make it runny.
- As time goes on, use less liquid to make thicker cereal. This helps baby learn to chew and swallow.
- Baby does not need sugar or sweeteners added to cereal.

How much cereal do I offer baby?

- Start with 1-2 tablespoons (15-30 ml) of dry infant cereal. Increase slowly to about 1/2 cup (125 ml) of infant cereal divided between 2 or 3 meals during the day.
- Throw out any cereal baby does not finish eating.
- Stop feeding when baby is full. A baby who is full will close or cover its mouth with its hands, turn its head away, shake its head "no" or cry.

When should I offer cereal to baby?

- Offer baby cereal after breastfeeding or formula feeding.
- Offer cereal in the morning first. Later on you may choose to offer cereal at other times during the day.

How do I offer cereal to baby?

- Always feed cereal from a spoon. This helps baby get used to using a spoon.
- Never put cereal in a bottle. This can cause choking.

What comes next?

Both vegetables and fruit may be added once baby is eating a wide variety of cereals.

Vegetables!

Start vegetables once baby is eating cereal and is around 5 to 7 months old. Vegetables have vitamins, minerals and fiber. They add new tastes and textures to baby's diet.

What kind of vegetables should I offer baby?

- Try one vegetable at a time. Offer it early in the day so you can watch and see if baby is allergic to that vegetable.
- Offer vegetables separately. Do not mix them. Let baby learn the taste of each vegetable.
- Wait 3 to 5 days before trying a new vegetable.
- Examples of vegetables to try include sweet potatoes, squash, peas, and green or yellow beans. You may choose homemade or store-bought baby food. Fresh or frozen vegetables may be used to make homemade baby food. Avoid foods with added salt, sugar and seasonings.

What if there is a sign of an allergy?

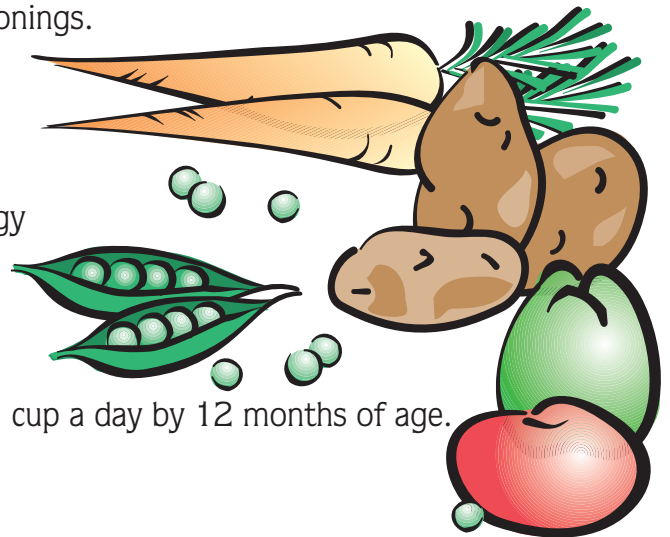
- Signs of an allergy include a rash, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain or breathing problems.
- Stop feeding the food you think caused the allergy until you can talk to baby's doctor.

How much vegetable do I offer baby?

- Start with 1 teaspoon (5 ml) the first day.
- Slowly increase to about 1/2 - 3/4 (125-180 ml) cup a day by 12 months of age.
- Stop feeding when baby is full.

How do I offer vegetables to baby?

- Offer only the amount of vegetables you think baby will eat at a feeding and serve from a small bowl or plate. (See Feeding Guide on page 13).
- If warming vegetables, stir and test to make sure it is not too hot.
- Always feed baby pureed vegetables from a spoon.
- Throw out any leftover food that has touched the feeding spoon or baby's mouth. For example, do not feed baby from a commercial baby food jar if you intend on saving the leftovers.
- Fresh, homemade baby food can be kept in the refrigerator for 24-48 hours.
- Store-bought food should be used within 2 to 3 days after the jar is opened.



TIP: You can make your own baby food. See Recipes & Feeding Guide in this booklet.

Fruit!

Fruit adds sweetness as well as vitamins, minerals and fiber.

5 to 7 Months

What kind of fruit should I offer baby?

- Try one fruit at a time. Wait 3 to 5 days before trying a new one to make sure baby does not have an allergic reaction.
- Use fresh fruit, unsweetened baby food in a jar or canned fruit in its own juice (not in syrup). Mash or puree fruit before feeding it to baby (see Recipes and Feeding Guide in this booklet).
- Store-bought "fruit-desserts" are high in sugar - baby does not need them.

How much fruit do I offer baby?

- Start with 1 teaspoon (5 ml) the first day.
- Slowly increase to about 1/2-3/4 (125-180 ml) cup a day by the time baby is 12 months old.
- Stop feeding when baby is full.

When should I offer fruit to baby?

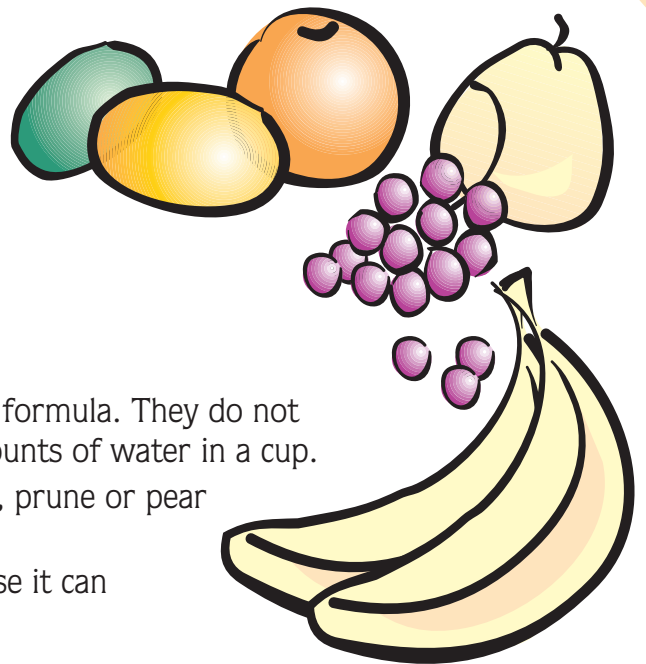
- You can give small amounts of fruit at each meal.

How do I offer fruit to baby?

- Always feed pureed fruit from a spoon.
- If warming baby food, stir and test to make sure it is not too hot.
- Throw out leftover food that has touched the feeding spoon or baby's mouth.

What about fruit juice?

- Babies get all the fluid they need from breast milk or formula. They do not need juice. If you think baby is thirsty, give small amounts of water in a cup.
- If you want to give juice, fruit juices like apple, grape, prune or pear can be given once baby is eating fruit.
- Give juice in a cup. Do not give juice in a bottle because it can cause early childhood cavities (rotten teeth).
- You do not need to buy special baby juice.
- Buy unsweetened juice (no sugar added).
- Give baby no more than 2-4 oz (60-120 ml) of juice per day.
- Do not give baby fruit drinks, crystals or pop because they offer no nutrition. Products labelled as fruit beverages, fruit drinks, fruit crystals, or fruit punches are **not** fruit juices.



What's next?

Protein-rich foods: meat, poultry, fish, tofu or beans!

Start protein-rich foods once baby is around 7 months old and is eating a variety of cereals, vegetables and fruits.

What kind of protein-rich foods should I offer baby?

- Add one new protein-rich food at a time. Wait 3-5 days before adding a new one.
- Suggested foods are beef, pork, veal, chicken, turkey, fish or cooked tofu. Next try liver, lamb or legumes (cooked or dried peas, beans, lentils).
- Processed meats such as ham, bacon, salami, bologna or sausages are not good choices because they are high in salt.

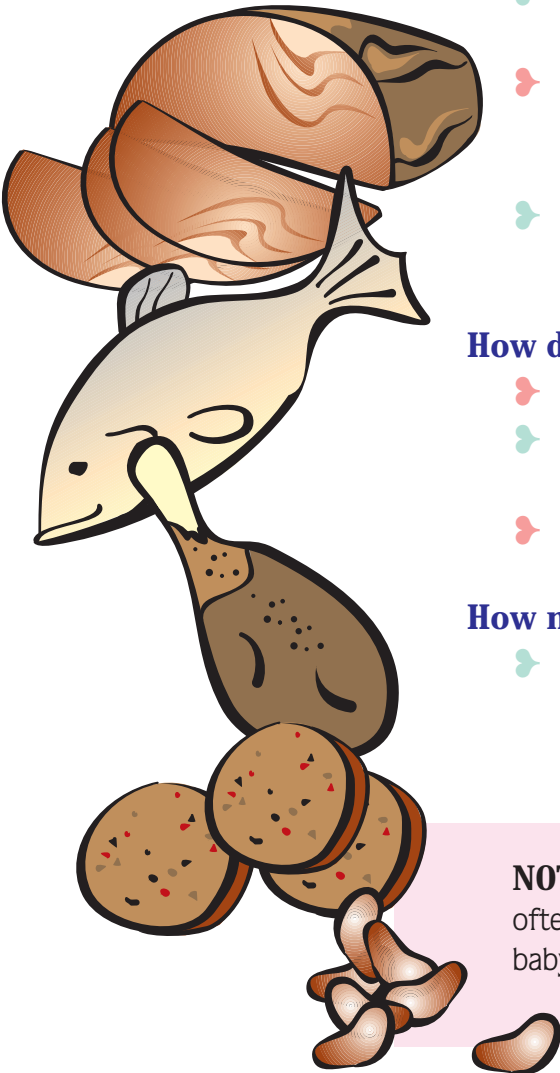
How do I prepare protein-rich foods?

- You can cook then puree, grind or mash protein-rich foods.
- To help baby learn to chew, mix cooked ground meat with pureed meat.
- Do not add salt or spices.

How much protein-rich food do I offer baby?

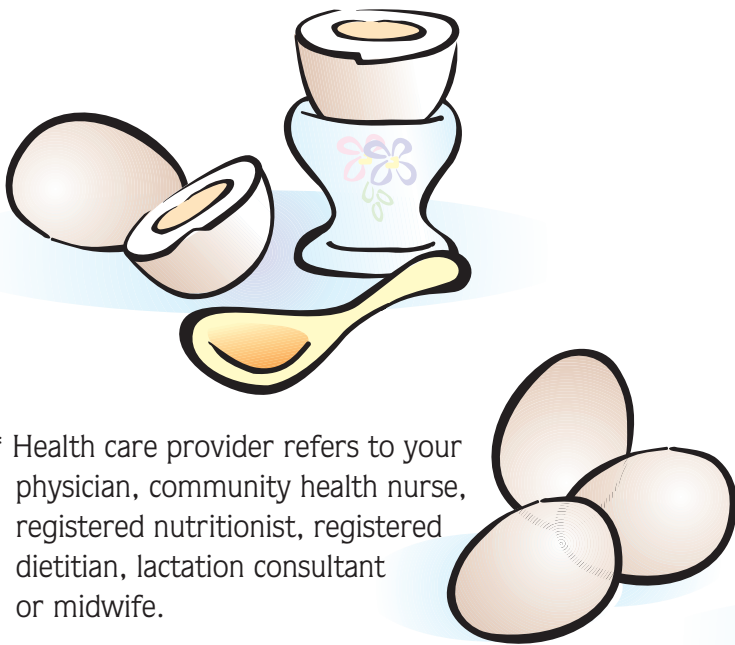
- Start with 1 teaspoon (5 ml) daily. Slowly increase the amount to about 6-8 tablespoons (90-120 ml) a day by the time baby is 12 months old.

NOTE: Vegetarian diets are sometimes low in fat and calories, and are often too high in fiber. Talk to a registered dietitian if you are offering baby a vegetarian diet.

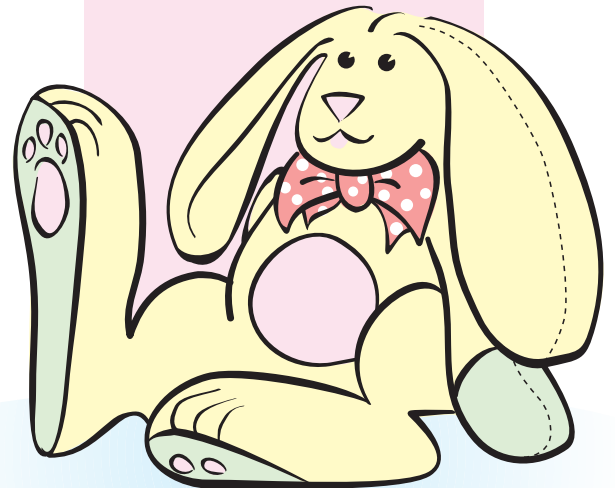


What about eggs?

- You can start with just the egg yolk around 7 months once you have introduced other protein-rich foods.
- Egg whites can be allergenic. Wait until after 12 months of age to give baby whole eggs (the yolk and whites).
- Never offer foods containing raw eggs.



If you have a family history of food allergies, please consult your health care provider* for feeding advice.



* Health care provider refers to your physician, community health nurse, registered nutritionist, registered dietitian, lactation consultant or midwife.

Milk Products

Foods made with milk, such as plain yogurt, hard cheeses or cottage cheese are high in protein and calcium. They add variety to baby's menu.

Begin including a milk product each day once baby is eating a variety of cereals, vegetables, fruits and protein-rich foods.

Yogurt

- Offer plain yogurt and add unsweetened fruit if desired. Do not give diet, low-fat or light yogurt.

Cheese

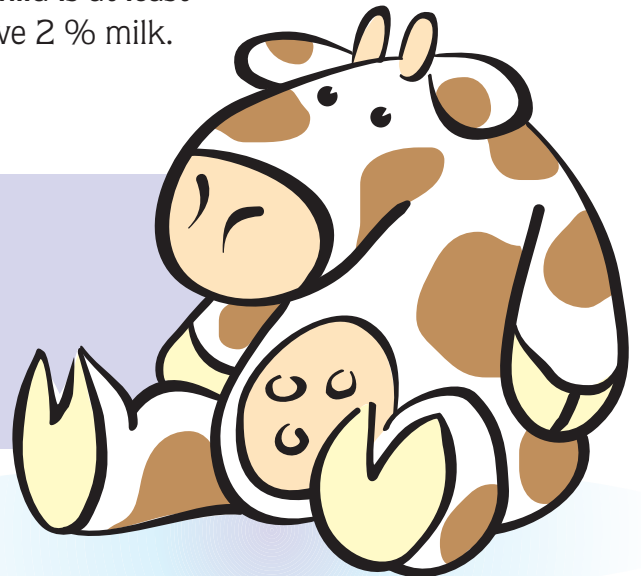
- Start with soft cheese like cottage cheese.
- Slowly add other types of cheese like cheddar or mozzarella.
- Hard cheeses can be grated or cut into thin slices.

Milk

- Homogenized (homo/whole) cow's milk can be given when baby is 9 to 12 months old as long as baby is eating a variety of other solid foods like breads and cereals (around 1/2 cup, or 125 ml of dry infant cereal), fruit and vegetables, meat and alternatives, and egg yolks.
- Wait until your child is at least 2 years old to give 2 % milk.



NOTE: Soy beverage, rice beverage or other vegetarian drinks should not replace breast milk, formula or homogenized milk in the first 2 years because they may not contain enough protein, fat or calories to help baby grow.



Finger Foods

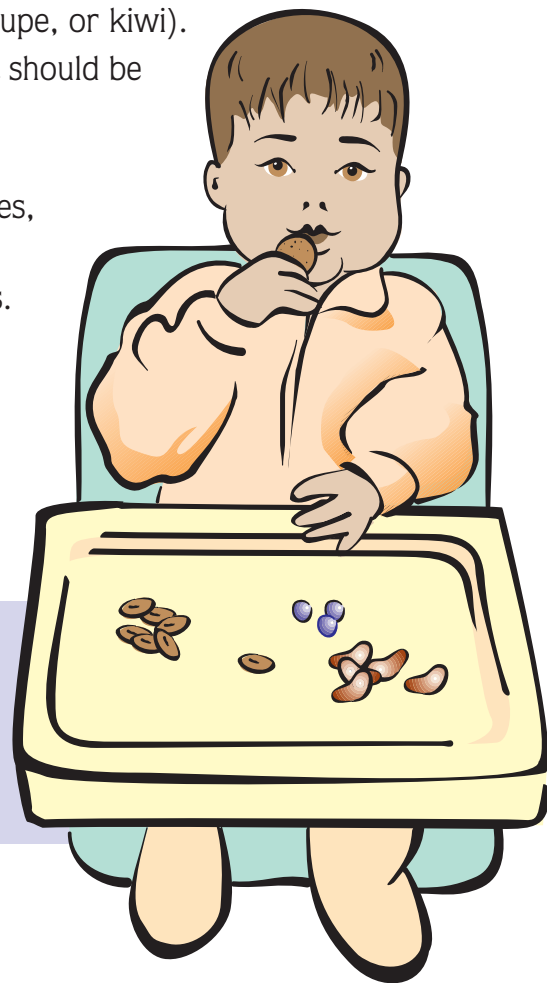
7 to 12 Months

- ✦ The next stage is finger foods. Around 7 to 9 months of age, baby will be able to hold food in its hands and bring the food to its mouth. Offering finger foods helps babies learn to chew and feed themselves.
- ✦ Most older babies enjoy eating with their hands. A finger food is any food that can be picked up from the high chair tray and brought to the mouth using fingers. Be ready for some fun and a mess!
- ✦ Finger foods should be offered as snacks and with meals.
- ✦ Finger foods should be healthy foods. There is no room in baby's diet for foods high in sugar or salt.

What are some examples of finger foods to give baby?

- ✦ Soft, ripe, peeled fruit cut into bite-size pieces or strips (for example: bananas, pears, peaches, plums, cantaloupe, or kiwi).
- ✦ Strawberries and grapes do not have to be peeled but should be cut into small bite-sized pieces to avoid choking.
- ✦ Cooked vegetable pieces (cut into strips).
- ✦ Dry toast strips, bread crusts, bread sticks, bagel pieces, rice cakes, melba toast, unsalted crackers.
- ✦ Shredded cheese, cheese cubes or cut-up cheese sticks.
- ✦ Cooked tender meat, cut up finely or ground.
- ✦ Cut-up casserole.
- ✦ Cooked pasta.
- ✦ Cooked tofu.
- ✦ Cooked beans and other legumes.

NOTE: At age 9 to 12 months, babies should be eating a variety of foods from Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating (cereals, vegetables and fruits, protein-rich foods and milk products) every day.



Foods to AVOID during the first year:



- honey, as it can make baby very sick with botulism, a type of food poisoning.
- hard candies, chocolate and potato chips.
- soft drinks, drink crystals, sport drinks.
- tea, coffee, herbal teas.
- salt, pickles.
- diet foods sweetened with sugar substitutes.
- low-fat or calorie reduced foods.

Foods to LIMIT during the first year:

- fried foods including french fries.
- cakes, cookies, sugar-coated cereal, jello.
- butter, margarine, oils, gravy, salad dressings, mayonnaise.
- fruit juice.

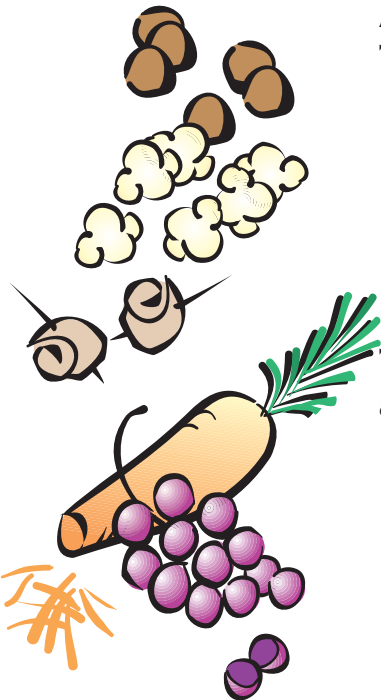
Avoid foods that can cause CHOKING.

These foods should be avoided until your child is at least 4 years old:

- solid foods that are hard, small and round, smooth or sticky such as candies, cough drops, raisins, gum and whole grapes.
- popcorn, nuts and seeds.
- fish with bones.
- snacks using toothpicks or skewers.

These foods are safer for infants and young children when they are prepared as described:

- hard vegetables or fruit (grate carrots, remove pits in fruit, cut grapes in half with seeds removed, soften raw vegetables by cooking so they are easier to chew).
- weiners or hot dogs (to make safe cut lengthwise and then into bite-size pieces).
- peanut butter and other spreads given alone are hard to swallow. To make safe, spread thinly on a cracker or bread. Consult your health care provider regarding allergy concerns.



Making Your Own Baby Food

What do I use to make my own baby food?

- You can use a blender, food mill, food processor, fork or potato masher.

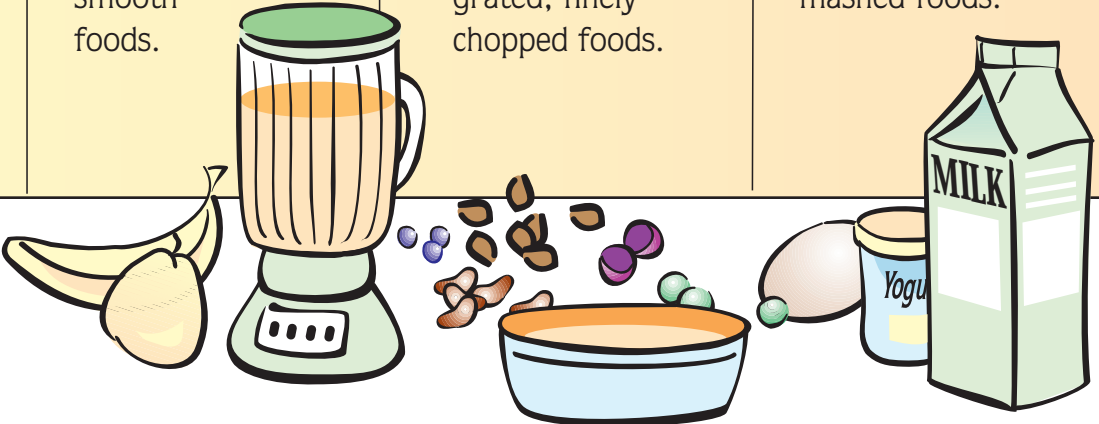
When can I start making baby food?

- You can start with vegetables and fruits when baby is 5 to 7 months and is eating infant cereal.
- At 7 to 9 months:
 - you can grind or purée meat, making it easier for baby to eat.
 - you can add egg yolk to baby's diet. Baby can try a whole egg (yolk and white) at 12 months. Watch baby carefully for any sign of an allergic reaction caused by egg whites.
 - you can include milk products as part of baby's diet. Examples of milk products include yogurt or cheese. Remember: baby is not ready to be given homogenized (homo/whole) milk until baby is at least 9 months of age.

Different textures of food for baby

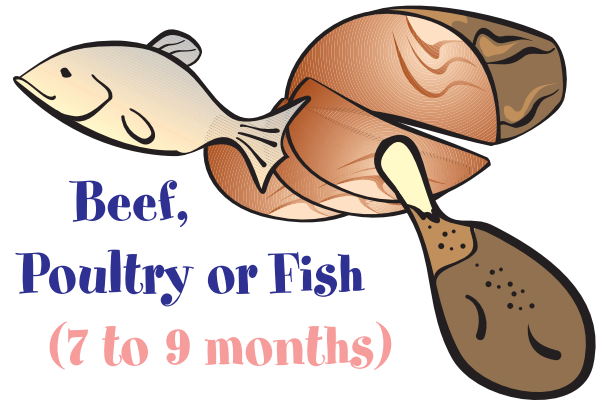
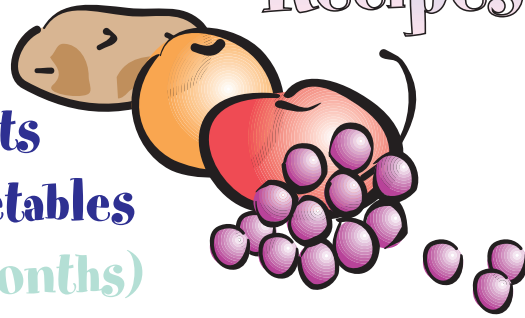
It is important for baby to experience different textures to help baby learn how to chew and swallow.

Birth to 4-6 months	4 to 7 months	6 to 9 months	9 to 12 months
Infants require only breastmilk or iron-fortified formula.	Strained, puréed, smooth foods.	Mashed, minced, grated, finely chopped foods.	Diced, cubed, mashed foods.



Recipes

Fruits and Vegetables (5 to 7 months)



Beef, Poultry or Fish (7 to 9 months)

Remember to wash your hands and work area with hot, soapy water before cooking.

1. Wash, peel and slice fresh fruit or vegetables (or use frozen or canned) to make 1 cup (250 ml).
2. Put into a pot or microwave-safe bowl with 1/4 cup water (60 ml) and cover with a lid.
3. STOVE: Cook over low heat for 5-10 minutes or until the pieces are soft.
MICROWAVE: Cook on high until pieces are soft and easy to squish between your fingers.
4. Mash or purée until smooth using a blender, food mill, food processor, fork or potato masher.
5. Cover leftovers and store in the fridge for up to 2 days. You can keep baby food for up to 2 months in a fridge freezer or 3-4 months in a deep freezer.

TIPS:

- Suggested vegetables: beans, carrots, peas, beets, sweet potato or broccoli.
- Suggested fruits: peeled apples, bananas, pears, peaches or cantaloupe.
- You do not have to cook banana, cantaloupe, avocados or unsweetened canned fruits.
- Fruits with seeds, like berries or kiwis, do not blend well.
- Do not add salt, pepper, sugar, sweetener, butter or margarine to baby food.

Remember to wash your hands and work area with hot, soapy water before cooking.

1. Remove fat, skin and bones from beef, poultry or fish. Cut into small pieces (1 inch or 2.5 cm cubes) to make 1 cup (250 ml).
2. Put raw meat into a pot or microwave safe bowl with 1/2 cup (125 ml) water. (Do not brown the meat first).
3. Cook until meat is tender.
STOVE: Cook over low heat.
MICROWAVE: Cook on medium or low power.
4. After cooking, take off the floating fat and mash the cooked meat using a food mill, fork or a food processor. (Add the cooking water to make the meat texture smoother).
5. Cover leftovers and store in the fridge for up to 2 days. You can keep baby food for up to 2 months in a fridge freezer or 3-4 months in a deep freezer.

TIPS:

- Suggested meats: beef, veal, lamb, chicken, turkey, pork, liver or fish.
- Do not add salt or spices.
- Meats need the longest time to blend (fried or broiled meats do not blend well).
- Legumes (peas, beans, lentils) can be cooked according to package directions.

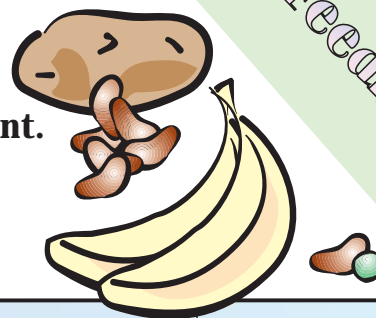




Feeding Guide

**Remember! Every baby is different.
This is only a GUIDE.**

Feeding Guide as revised by
Alberta Community Nutritionists.



Recipes & Feeding Guide

	4 to 6 Months	5 to 7 Months	7 to 9 Months	9 to 12 Months
Breast milk OR Iron-fortified Formula	Nursing on cue* 5-6 feedings on cue* 25-36 oz (750-1080 ml) daily	Nursing on cue* 5-6 feedings on cue* 25-36 oz (750-1080 ml) daily	Nursing on cue* 3-4 feedings on cue* 24-32 oz (720-960 ml) daily	Nursing on cue* 3-4 feedings on cue* 18-32 oz (540-960 ml) daily. Homo milk can be introduced.
Breakfast	OPTIONAL: 1-2 tbsp (15-30 ml) dry** infant cereal. Do not rush to start giving infant cereals to baby. Timing depends on each baby's signs of readiness for solid food.	3-4 tbsp (45-60ml) dry** infant cereal	4-6 tbsp (60-90 ml) dry** infant cereal, 2-3 tbsp (30-45ml) fruit OPTIONAL: 1 egg yolk	6 - 8 tbsp (90 -120 ml) dry** infant cereal OPTIONAL: 1 egg yolk
Mid-Morning				Finger foods such as crackers, cheese, fruit
Lunch		1-2 tbsp (15-30 ml) vegetables, 1-2 tbsp (15 -30 ml) fruit	2-3 tbsp (30-45 ml) protein-rich food OR 2-3 tbsp (30-45 ml) dry** infant cereal, 2-3 tbsp (30-45 ml) vegetables, 2-3 tbsp (30-45 ml) fruit	2 - 3 tbsp (30 - 45 ml) protein-rich food, Finger food: bread or pasta, 3-5 tbsp (45-75 ml) vegetables (bite-sized pieces), 2 -3 tbsp (30 - 45 ml) fruit (bite-sized pieces)
Afternoon		1-2 tbsp (15 - 30 ml) fruit	Finger foods such as crackers, cheese, fruit	Finger foods such as crackers, cheese, fruit
Supper		3-4 tbsp (45-60 ml) dry** infant cereal, 1-2 tbsp (15-30 ml) vegetables	2-3 tbsp (30-45 ml) protein-rich food, 2-3 tbsp (30-45 ml) vegetables, 2-3 tbsp (30-45 ml) fruit	2-3 tbsp (30-45 ml) protein-rich food, 3-5 tbsp (45-75 ml) vegetables (bite- size pieces), 2-3 tbsp (30-45 ml) fruit (bite-size pieces)
Evening			OPTIONAL: 2 tbsp (30 ml) dry** infant cereal	OPTIONAL: 2 tbsp (30 ml) dry** infant cereal, 2-3 tbsp (30-45 ml) fruit (bite-size pieces)
Texture of Foods	Thin runny cereal	Cereal the texture of apple sauce, puréed vegetable	Thick cereal, puréed or mashed soft table foods. Introduce finger foods, grated or finely chopped.	Soft, minced or diced table foods, finger foods (safe size and shape)

Note: 1 Tablespoon (tbsp) = 15 ml

* Common cues of hunger include sucking, smacking lips, searching with an open mouth, putting a fist in the mouth or crying.

** Dry infant cereal mixed to appropriate consistency with breast milk, iron-fortified infant formula or water.



Thank you to the registered dietitians, public health nurses, pediatricians, community nutritionists, community support workers and consumers in Manitoba who developed this resource and provided Alberta Health and Wellness permission to adapt and reproduce this resource.

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