

Feeding your Baby, from 2 weeks to 6 months

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From Birth to 6 months:

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends “exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life. Exclusive breastfeeding is defined as ...no supplementation of any type (no water, no juice, no nonhuman milk [formula], and no foods).” “Infants weaned before 12 months of age should not receive cow’s milk but should receive iron-fortified infant formula.”

How often to feed

Young babies need to eat often: at least 8 – 12 times in a 24 hour day. Sometimes, they’ll go three hours between feeds. Other times, especially in the evening, they may want to eat every hour. Watch for hunger cues, like “rooting”, sucking on their hands, tongue thrusts.

Older babies feed less frequently, perhaps every 3 – 4 hours. By 6 months, most babies no longer *need* to eat overnight, but many like to. If baby is eating plenty during the day, and gaining weight well, then parents can decide whether overnight feedings are working for them or not.

How much to feed

If you’re breastfeeding, feed until baby shows full cues (they fall asleep or stop nursing). Make sure they nurse *at least* 10 minutes on the first side, then offer the second side for as long as they want. If you’re bottle-feeding, here’s a basic guideline: over a 24 hour period, babies need 2 – 2 ½ ounces per pound they weigh (150 cc per kg). So a ten pound baby needs 20 – 25 ounces total in a 24 hour day, which is 3 ounces per feeding if you feed 8 times a day.

How to know your baby is getting plenty

From 1 week to 2 months, you should change 6 – 10 diapers each day. For a breastfed baby, at least 3 of these should contain poop. A formula fed baby may poop only twice per day. At 2 months, baby’s bowels slow down, and baby may go a few days without pooping.

Breastfeeding Tips

- Reducing sore nipples – note, some discomfort in the first minute of a feed is normal, but here are tips to minimize that. The discomfort should be gone by the time baby is about 4 weeks.
 - Make sure you’ve got a good latch every time. Search online for “video asymmetric latch” to see some helpful videos. Or have a lactation consultant check your latch (see below).
 - When showering or bathing, wash your breasts with water only. Soap can dry nipples.
 - After a feed, hand express a few drops of milk, and rub those into the nipple.
 - Keep nipples dry (if you use nursing pads for leaking, change them when they get wet).
 - Eat healthy. Include acidophilus (e.g. yogurt) and minimize sugar to avoid yeast infections.
- Improving milk supply
 - Most important thing is frequency of feeds. Feed your baby often: 8 – 14 times a day.
 - Don’t limit time at the breast. Feed till he’s full: *at least* 10 minutes, but lots more is OK.
 - Spend time skin-to-skin – dress baby in a diaper only, and tuck baby inside your shirt.
 - Take care of yourself: rest, eat well, drink, relax / reduce stress, ask for help with tasks.
 - Avoid supplemental bottles of formula: lead baby to nurse less often, which reduces supply
 - You may choose to pump to increase milk supply. Use breast compression while pumping.
 - For lots more tips see <http://milkshare.com/supply> and see “For more help” below.
- Pumping: check out ideas at www.askdrsears.com/html/2/T025600.asp
- Storing: Make sure you have clean hands and clean equipment when you begin. You can store in the pump container, or transfer the milk to a bottle or a breastmilk storage bag. Milk will keep at room temperature for four hours. Otherwise, put it in the refrigerator for up to 8 days, or the freezer for up to 3 months.

- Where to get help. If you're having challenges, seek out help! The sooner, the better!
 - Call a breastfeeding hotline at your hospital, or 206.458.8782 or 1-800-994-9662.
 - Attend La Leche League (www.llli.org), Breastfeeding 9-1-1 (www.birthandbeyond.com); Breastfeeding Drop-In Group (www.pugetsoundbreastfeeding.com) or Breastfeeding Support Group (<http://www.nurturingexpressions.com/classes/>)
 - Set up an appointment with a lactation consultant. Find one at www.ilca.org.

For more on breastfeeding, see: www.llli.com; www.breastfeeding.com.

Bottle-Feeding Tips

Babies digest milk or formula better if it has been warmed, so whenever convenient, you should warm baby's bottle. Simply fill a bowl with hot water, and place the bottle in the bowl for a few minutes.

Some breastfed babies resist when you try to introduce a bottle. Here are some tips:

- Have someone other than mom offer the bottle. If mom tries, baby may just want to nurse.
- Some babies are more likely to take a bottle when they're very hungry and a little desperate. Other babies do best if you nurse first till they're mostly full and relaxed, then try the bottle.
- Try different positions – some babies want to be held just like they're breastfeeding; others may prefer to be held upright, facing outward. Some babies like to be walked while they eat.
- Choose a bottle with a nipple shaped like the breast, or like a pacifier your baby takes. Try different brands of bottles. But only within limits! If they didn't like bottle #1 or #2, then #3 may be the one they'll take. But, if they've rejected 4 or more bottles, then buying more is a waste of money... they just don't like bottles at this time. If you can, wait a week or so, then try again.
- You can try feeding from a small cup. Hold the cup near baby's lips, and tilt it so the liquid is at the edge, and let baby lap it up with his or her tongue. (Practice with water.)

Don't prop a bottle up in baby's mouth and walk away. Baby could choke.

Formula Feeding Tips

Look for generic formula – it is less expensive, but similar quality to name-brand formulas that advertise extensively. In general, it is better to use a formula made from cow's milk than to use a formula made from soy milk. Always follow the instructions on the can for how to mix the formula.

For more on formula: www.infantformula.org/faqs

Feeding baby after 6 months

The AAP recommends: "Complementary foods rich in iron should be introduced gradually beginning around 6 months of age." Introducing other foods before 6 months does not increase baby's growth (or help him sleep), it only "substitutes foods that lack the protective components of human milk." "Breastfeeding should be continued for at least the first year of life and beyond for as long as mutually desired by mother and child. There is no upper limit to the duration of breastfeeding..."

Signs that baby is ready for solids:

Although solids are not necessary before six months, some parents want to begin earlier. If there is no family history of food allergies, watch for developmental signs baby is ready: Baby can sit up well, without support, and can pick up objects and bring them to her mouth. Baby has lost the tongue thrust reflex. (Before this, if you put a spoon into baby's mouth, baby's tongue pushes it out.)

First Solids

From 6 – 9 months, breastmilk and/or formula is still baby's primary source of nutrition. Feeding solids at this age is all about baby learning about different tastes, textures, and how to manage solids. Baby should be sitting up while eating. Spoon feed just a teaspoon of liquid-y pureed food to begin with. Introduce only one new food at a time. Feed it once a day for a few days, watching for any signs of allergy (a rash, runny nose, congestion, itching, ear infection, stomach pain, cramping, diarrhea.) Good foods to start with include applesauce, pear sauce, sweet potatoes or yams, mashed bananas or avocados. Then, try mashed potatoes, carrots, peas, and squash. Avoid these common allergens for the first year: cow's milk, egg whites, seafood, wheat, nuts, peanuts, soy, corn and chocolate.