

Exclusive breast feeding provides optimal nutrition and health protection for the first six months of life. Breastfeeding with appropriate foods from 6 months until 12 months of age is the ideal feeding pattern for infants. A reasonable alternative to breast milk is commercially prepared infant formula. Exclusive breast feeding or infant formula can provide all the food an infant requires for the first 6 months of life.

Although an infant may readily accept solid foods before this age, exclusive breast feeding or infant formula is the best food for growth and development.

There is no rush to give solid food to your baby; in fact the longer you wait the better.

At six months solid foods may be given. Do not replace breast milk or infant formula entirely, but rather gradually add new foods to the diet.

YOU CAN INTRODUCE SOLIDS AT SIX MONTHS BECAUSE:

- ✿ The mouth and tongue muscles have developed enough to push the food to the back of the mouth.
- ✿ The amount of saliva produced has noticeably increased.
- ✿ The digestive enzymes are present and ready to handle solid foods at about this time.
- ✿ As your baby's iron stores are running out, other foods are needed to supply this necessary mineral.
- ✿ A baby who is fed breast milk (and no other food or drink) will have an ample iron intake until she/he is six months old.

WHY NOT EARLIER?

If you give solids too soon, your baby may take less milk than she/he needs. If she/he is forced to eat a lot, she/he will learn to eat a lot. The digestive system will also be forced to do extra work, before it is ready, which may cause stomach and/or bowel upsets.

Feeding your baby cereal or solids to sleep through the night is not necessary. Once a baby weighs 10 to 12 pounds, she/he can consume enough milk at one feed so she/he can sleep for up to six hours at a time or through the night.

By learning the messages your baby sends you when hungry or full, you help develop his/her appetite control. It is not necessary to "force feed" if you read the messages accurately.

It is important to be able to identify and separate the need to eat from the need for love or attention. Understand that appetite will change with growth needs, so some days she/he may want to eat more than others. Let your baby decide when it is time to feed and how much she/he wants.

HOW TO INTRODUCE FOODS

Begin new foods one at a time and start with small amounts.

By introducing foods one at a time for 4-5 days, you will know if a food causes an allergic reaction. It takes time and patience to get your baby to accept some foods. It is normal for baby not to like a food when it is first offered – so try it again at a later time.

Your baby knows when she/he has had enough to eat, so do not coax or force your baby to eat more. It might cause her/him to eat more than she/he needs or develop negative feelings about food.

Messy eating is a necessary developmental process for babies.

Put plastic under the high chair for easy cleaning. When able, allow your baby to participate in the feeding process to increase developmental skills of hands to mouth.

Allow baby to feed him/herself.

HEALTHFUL HINTS

- ✿ To prevent choking do not prop the bottle in your baby's mouth.
- ✿ To prevent ear infections do not allow your baby to lie flat during feeds.



- ✿ Avoid letting your baby suck for long periods of time on milk, fruit juice or sweetened drinks. Sugar in your baby's mouth turns to acid that attacks the enamel on the teeth causing cavities.
- ✿ Make up only enough formula for one feed; any leftover formula in the bottle should be discarded after the feed.
- ✿ Liquids heated in the microwave may overheat or form hot spots which could scald your baby, even when the bottle and nipple feel cool to your touch.
- ✿ To wean your baby off the bottle, only offer plain water in the bottle. Put milk or juice in a cup.
- ✿ Baby jars hold more than one serving, remove the required amount of food from the jar and refrigerate the rest for the next feed (will keep in refrigerator up to 72 hours).

IMPORTANT

Boiled water should be offered, especially during the summer months with formula fed babies. Boil all water (including bottled water) for 3 minutes and allow to cool before using. **No water is required for babies who are exclusively breast fed.**

Do not add sugar, honey or Karo to water. There is an association with botulism with an introduction of honey before age 1.

Do not substitute regular cow's milk for breast milk or commercially prepared formula before 1 year of age.

Child Health Clinics for feeding advice or problems are held at:

Hamilton, St. George's and Somerset
Tel: 278-6460 or 278-6461

Ask your Health Visitor 292-3095

Nutrition Services, Department of Health
Tel: 278-6469 or 278-6467

Email: cahollis@gov.bm or mlbfurbert@gov.bm



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Feeding your Baby



HEALTHFUL HINTS FROM NUTRITION SERVICES



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of Health and Seniors
Department of Health

AGE	BABY CAN	FOOD	COMMENTS
Newborn (0-6 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suck and swallow liquid Push tongue out 	Exclusive Breast Milk, Infant Formula	Exclusive breast milk is the best food for full term infants until 6 months of age. A reasonable alternative to exclusive breast feeding is a commercial infant formula with iron.
6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit without support Hold head steady Push food to back of mouth with tongue and swallow easily Grab hold of things Begin to chew (6-8 months) 	Cereals Fluoride drops	Continue providing breast milk and/or commercial infant formula with iron. Add Iron fortified cereal (rice or barley). Mix with iron fortified formula or breast milk and spoon feed slowly. Do not put cereal in the bottle. It may cause baby to choke, encourage over-eating and dental caries. For healthy tooth development obtain fluoride drops from the Infant Clinic in your parish FREE OF CHARGE.
7 months		Vegetables strained, pureed or mashed	Start with yellow vegetables, such as carrots, squash, sweet potatoes. Then add green vegetables such as peas or green beans. Only one new vegetable should be started each week. Introduce strained, pureed or mashed vegetables. Do not add butter, margarine or salt.
8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a cup 	Fruit and fruit juice	Always feed vegetables before fruit, to avoid baby filling up on sweet things. Introduce one fruit at a time, for 3-4 days before trying a new one. Introduce strained or mashed soft fruits. If choosing to offer fruit juice, offer diluted juice from a cup – ¼ cup daily.
9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a bite of food Pick up small pieces and feed self 	Meat/meat alternative Finger Foods Egg Yolk Dairy Products	Add strained meat, poultry, fish or beans to provide protein and iron. Start one type of meat at a time. Introduce when teeth erupt and chewing begins. Can introduce coarsely chopped foods. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toast squares/crackers Small pieces of cooked vegetables and peeled soft fruit Small pieces of cooked, ground meat with all bones and tough parts removed. Introduce to increase iron consumption. Begin with small amount (¼ tsp) of mashed hard yolk and watch for allergic reaction. Cottage cheese, yogurt and cheeses are easily digested and well accepted.
10 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chew and swallow soft mashed foods Begin to use a spoon (10-12 months) 	Other Vegetables Chopped Foods	May now be gradually introduced – cooked, strained cauliflower or broccoli. As digestive system matures chopped or ground vegetables may be offered instead of purees.
11 months		Egg White	Begin with ¼ tsp of egg white and watch for allergic reaction. When intake is established start whole egg.
12 months		A variety of Foods	By 1 year your child should be consuming a variety of foods from the 5 food groups in addition to breast milk/infant formula. Offer small child size servings. (See "Feed your 1-5 year old" handout).

FEEDING PATTERNS WITH AGE

The quantities are based on average weight of babies, so should be used only as a guide. A small baby with a small stomach will feed more often.

Rule of thumb, 2 to 2 ½ oz. of breast milk or formula for each pound baby weighs.

AGE	NUMBER OF FEEDS PER DAY		AMOUNT OF COMMERCIAL INFANT FORMULA PER FEED	OTHER FOODS
	Infant Formula	Breast Feeding		
Birth	8 or more feeds	8-12 feeds	3 increasing to 4 oz.	+ None
2-6 months	8 decreasing to 6	6-8 feeds	4 increasing to 6 oz.	+ None
6 months				+ Once baby weighs 13 to 16 pounds, solids may be introduced on doctor's advice only. Start with 1 tsp of cereal and increase to 3-8 tbsp per day
7 months	6 decreasing to 5	on cue	6 increasing to 7 oz.	+ Pureed foods (2 new foods per week at most) 2-3 tbsp of various solids at 2-3 feeds
8-9 months	5 decreasing to 3	on cue	7 increasing to 8 oz.	+ 6-7 tbsp of various solids at 3 feeds
9-12 months	4 feeds and 3 solid meals	on cue	6 oz.	+ 7-10 tbsp or 4 oz. or ½ cup per feed