

# Help me be HEALTHY



6 to 12 months

My name is: \_\_\_\_\_

I weigh \_\_\_\_\_ pounds. I am \_\_\_\_\_ inches long.

A special note for me: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## I am your baby

Help me grow best with your love.

Continue to feed me breast milk or baby formula with iron until I turn one. Breastfeed me after one year if we want. I might drink breast milk or formula four or more times a day.



My tummy can hold about 6 to 8 ounces at a time.

Hold me when you feed me. I feel safe in your arms.

Sometimes I stop eating to talk with you or look around. I am not full yet. Please talk to me. I love our time together.

## Feed me right...with food and love.

I know when I need to eat.

I will show you that I am hungry when I:



- Move my arms and legs.
- Turn my head and open my mouth.
- Suck on my hand or fuss a little.

I know how much to eat.

I will show you that I am full when I:

- Stop sucking and let go of the nipple.
- Look relaxed or sleepy.
- Frown, fuss, and kick if you try to feed me.
- Turn my head away or avoid eye contact with you.

**Offer the breast, bottle or spoon again to make sure I do not want more to eat.**

**Let me decide if I want to stop eating.**

## You want the best for me!

With your help, I will learn to eat other foods.

If our family has allergies or I was born early, talk to the doctor and WIC Nutritionist before you start other foods.

Be sure that I am ready.



To eat other foods, I must be able to:

- Sit and hold my head steady.
- Show I want food by opening my mouth.
- Show I do not want food by closing my mouth or turning my head.

Keep me safe while I eat

Wash your hands and mine before you fix my food or feed me. If you heat my food in a microwave oven, please check for hot spots so I do not burn my mouth!

Foods that can make me sick

- raw or undercooked meats.
- raw or soft-cooked eggs.
- unpasteurized fruit juice or cider.
- honey or food made with it.
- cold pre-cooked meats or deli meats.

Put my food in a separate dish and feed it to me with a baby spoon. Throw out all food left in the dish after my meal.

One new food at a time.

Let me taste and learn about one new food for several days. Vomiting, wheezing, rash, or diarrhea may be signs I am not ready or have an allergy to a food. Stop feeding me the food and tell the doctor.



## Choking Hazards

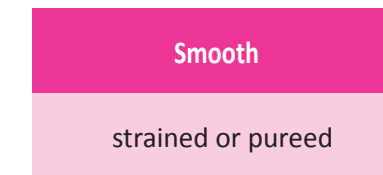
Infants (and children) should be seated and supervised during meals and snacks. Talking, crawling or walking around, lying down, or riding in a vehicle all increase the risk of choking.

For now, avoid:

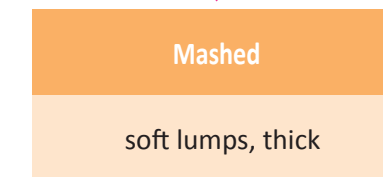
- Hard foods: candy, nuts, popcorn, seeds.
- Raw foods: vegetables and hard fruits.
- Round, slippery foods: meat or cheese sticks, hot dogs, whole grapes or cherry tomatoes.
- Sticky foods: peanut butter, dried fruits.
- Sharp foods: chips, crackers.
- Chewy foods: tough meats, chewing gum.



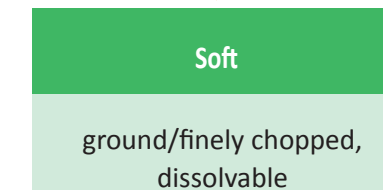
## Food texture



Prepared infant foods are often smooth and pourable purees which do not need to be chewed.



As I am ready, offer me mashed and lumpy foods. I can use my fingers, tongue, and gums to help me move food around for chewing and swallowing.



As I grow and develop more skills for eating, it is important that I practice these skills with the appropriate infant food texture. I do not need teeth to chew soft foods.



# Healthy eating habits

## Learning to eat my own way.

Like all babies, I might spit out the food or make a face when I taste a new food. I will open my mouth if I want more and keep my mouth closed or turn my head if I do not. Do not force me to eat but do offer the food at future meals.



*Please let me try many foods, even those you do not like!*

I may need to taste a food 10 times before I decide I like it.

Infant cereals, meats, vegetables, and fruits are full of vitamins and nutrients, and should be gradually introduced in any order. As I learn about these new foods, I do not need sugar, salt, butter/oil, or gravy added to my foods. If you buy baby food in a jar, choose plain vegetables, fruits, and meats.

## Choose healthy foods.

I need them to grow. Please do not give me pre-packaged infant dinners or desserts.

Let me learn to eat foods like:

- Infant cereal >** oatmeal or multigrain.
- Vegetables >** squash, peas, carrots, green beans, spinach, pumpkin.
- Fruits >** apples, peaches, bananas, pears, apricots, berries.
- Proteins >** beans and lentils (cooked and mashed), soft cooked meats, scrambled egg, tofu.

## Let me eat food with my fingers.

When I am 8 or 9 months, I might want to eat food with my fingers. You still need to use a spoon to feed me. But let me try to feed myself, too.

### Ideas for safe and healthy finger foods include:

- Tiny pieces of cooked, soft vegetables and fruits.
- Tiny pieces of cooked meats.
- Dried beans cooked and mashed, eggs, or tofu.
- Chopped noodles or rice.

## How much should I eat?

Start with 1 to 2 tablespoons of one food in a bowl. As I learn to eat, I may want more food. It is good to let me eat until I act full or lose interest. Some meals will be just breast milk or formula while others may include breastmilk or formula and one or more foods. I need to eat 5 or 6 meals a day.



- Let me eat until I act full. I might close my lips, turn or shake my head, or raise my arms. Ask me if I am full. Then, let me stop eating if I want to.
- Eat with me at our family meals. I eat better when you are with me. Let's turn the TV off so we can talk.

## How do you know I eat enough?

The doctor says I am gaining weight and growing well.

## Teach me to drink from a cup

Use a small cup that does not break. Pour a little water into it. Lift the cup so it touches my lips and I get a taste.

I need practice! Let me drink from a cup at meals. Offer me breast milk, formula, or plain water in a cup. Hold the cup and let me take small sips. By my first birthday, I should no longer be drinking from a bottle.



## Play with me!

- Put me on a blanket on the floor and sit down with me.
- Put a toy just out of my reach so I can move to get it.
- Roll a ball to me. Hold both my hands and let me walk with you.

## Look what I can do!

I love to learn from you. Read to me. Sing a song. Let's play games like peek-a-boo and so-big.

- Take me for a walk and show me new things.
- I'm active – keep an eye on me!



## 6 to 9 Months

- I can sit up and roll over.
- I will start to creep and crawl.
- I like to shake things and drop them to see what happens.

## 9 to 12 Months



- I like to use my hands.
- I can hold my cup.
- I like to point and wave bye-bye.
- I say *da-da* and *ma-ma*.
- I can pull myself up to stand.

## Healthy teeth, healthy smiles

I need your help to keep my teeth and gums healthy.

- Offer me only breastmilk, formula, and/or water. Avoid tea, sports drink, soda, and juice. These do not help me grow and they may hurt my teeth and tummy!
- Do not let me carry and sip from my bottle or cup throughout the day.
- Brush my teeth and gums.
- Take me to the dentist after my first tooth comes in, by my first birthday.

## Health and Safety Tips

- Take me to visit the doctor when I am 6 months, 9 months, and one year of age. I need checkups and shots to stay healthy.
- Never leave me alone when I eat or when changing or bathing me.
- Make me sit when I eat.
- Never put me to bed with a bottle. I can choke, get an earache, or ruin my teeth.
- Clean my teeth twice a day with a clean, wet, soft cloth or toothbrush.
- Continue to put me on my back to sleep. Do not let me sleep on the couch.
- Be sure to ask what food and how much food I had to eat if other people feed me.
- Let me explore and learn. See each room like I will from the floor and make it safe for me.
- Buckle me into an infant car seat when we ride in a car.
- Install my seat in the car's back seat, facing backwards. It's the law!
- Keep me away from cigarette smoke, vapes, drugs, and alcohol. Those habits are not healthy for you or for me.



## Put sunscreen on me when I play in the sun.

Apply a sunscreen every 2 hours that protects against UVA and UVB rays. Make sure the sunscreen has an SPF of at least 30.



**Ask the WIC Nutritionist if you need help with any of these tips.**



Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Child and Family Well-Being  
Community Nutrition Services Section • [www.ncdhhs.gov/nc-wic-cacfp](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/nc-wic-cacfp)  
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