

Protect your baby from getting sick



Wash your hands thoroughly before preparing or serving food.

Wash your baby's hands before serving food.

As your baby crawls and explores, germs can easily spread from their hands to their mouth.

Feed your baby from a bowl, not the baby food container, to avoid transferring germs to the food in the container.

Put a small amount of baby food in a separate bowl. When your baby is done eating, throw away any food left in the bowl.

When can your baby eat more?

As your baby gets older, they might be ready for more food and more texture.



- Offer more food between breastfeeding or formula feedings.
- Aim for a variety of foods from all the food groups. This will help your baby develop good eating habits and can prevent picky eating later.
- As your baby's eating skills develop, gradually progress to thicker and lumpier foods.

- Allow your baby to use the spoon to learn to self-feed.
- When your baby can pick up foods and bring them to their mouth, you can give finger foods. Be sure finger foods are soft and cut into small pieces to reduce the risk of choking.

The taste of new foods may surprise your baby. Give them time to get used to new flavors. Be patient and do not force your baby to eat. Offer foods multiple times. It may take 10 tries for your baby to accept a food.

Your baby's appetite will change from day to day. This is okay. Your baby will tell you they are full by turning their head, closing their mouth, or pushing their food away.

Ask the WIC Nutritionist or your child's healthcare provider if you need help with any of these tips.



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Starting Solid Foods



Starting solid foods is an exciting time for you and your baby. This brochure provides general guidelines on introducing solid foods to your baby.

The American Academy of Pediatrics

recommends breastfeeding and/or formula feeding as the sole source of nutrition for your baby's first 6 months. At 6 months of age, solid foods can be added to your baby's diet; however, breastmilk and/or infant formula will continue to be your baby's main source of energy and nutrients until at least 1 year of age.

Not ready to stop breastfeeding at 12 months?

Great! Keep breastfeeding for as long as you and your baby want.

Each baby's readiness for solid foods depends on their own rate of development.



Your baby may be ready for solid foods if they can:

- Hold their head up.
- Sit up with little or no support.
- Show they want food by opening their mouth to take it from a spoon.
- Grasp small objects and bring them to their mouth.
- Keep food in their mouth and swallow it instead of pushing it back out.

Did You Know?

Starting solid foods before your baby is ready can make your baby become fussy and get tummy aches. Early introduction of solid foods does not help babies grow faster or sleep longer.

Steps for Starting Solid Foods

1. Start with single-ingredient food. Your baby's first food can be from any food group. Good first choices include iron-fortified infant cereal (oatmeal or multigrain) or infant food meats that provide iron and zinc to support growth. Your WIC food benefits have many options to choose from for your baby's first food.

2. Give soft foods. Your baby is learning to swallow solid foods. Beginning foods need to be soft or pureed so they are easy to swallow, such as cooked and pureed fruits and vegetables. Offer your baby food from a bowl with a small spoon. Make sure your baby is always seated and supervised during meals and snacks.



3. Give your baby only one single-ingredient food at a time. Wait 3 to 5 days before trying another new food. Watch for signs of any allergic reaction, such as a rash, wheezing, vomiting or diarrhea. If your baby has an allergic reaction, stop offering that food and talk with your baby's pediatrician.

Current guidelines recommend introducing soft, infant-safe foods that may cause allergies (such as eggs, dairy, peanut products, fish, soy) along with other solid foods. There is no evidence that waiting to introduce these foods prevents food allergies. **If your baby has other allergies or eczema, talk with your pediatrician about when to introduce these foods.**

4. Start with food once a day. Remember, your baby has a small stomach, so offer a small amount of food to start, about 1-2 tablespoons. Give your baby solid foods after they have nursed or received their bottle of breastmilk or formula.

5. Offer healthy foods. Do not add sugar, corn syrup, other sweeteners, or salt to your baby's food. Babies younger than 12 months should not be given juice. It may reduce your baby's appetite for breastmilk or formula and other nutritious baby foods.

6. Create a pleasant eating environment. Be patient and allow your baby time to experiment with foods and have fun. Your baby may not eat much and will make a mess. That is a normal part of learning to eat solid foods!

Keeping your baby safe

Do NOT give your baby:

Honey.

Honey can contain bacteria that can make your baby sick. **Do not** feed honey or foods containing honey to children younger than 12 months.

Cow's, goat's, or sheep's milk.

These types of milk do not have the correct amount of nutrients for your baby. They can be hard for your baby's kidneys and digestive system to process. Cow's milk may be introduced at 1 year of age.

Raw or undercooked eggs or meat.

These could make your baby sick.



Choking hazards

Some foods may increase your baby's risk of choking.

Examples include:

- Whole pieces of canned fruit.
- Pieces of hard raw vegetables or fruit, such as carrots or apples.
- Uncooked dry fruit, such as raisins.
- Whole grapes, berries, cherry tomatoes.
- Nuts, such as cashews or peanuts.
- Hot dogs, meat sticks, and sausages.
- Large chunks of cheese, and string cheese.
- Chunks or spoonfuls of nut butters, such as peanut butter.
- Cookies and granola bars.
- Chips, pretzels or popcorn.
- Round or hard candy.
- Gummy candies and chewy fruit snacks.

Choking Hazard:

To keep your baby safe and healthy, do NOT put food in a bottle.

