For the first 6 months of your baby’s life, breast milk was all they needed to grow and be healthy.

Now, at about 6 months old, they are likely ready to eat solid foods. Breast milk is still the most important food, but you can now add solid foods during their feedings. Solids foods will provide nutrients, flavours and textures. These are all important for their overall growth and development.

Some babies may need to start baby food earlier than 6 months old. For example:

**For a child at high risk for allergy:** If your baby has a parent or sibling (brother or sister) with an allergic condition, your baby may be at high risk for allergy. You may need to introduce solids as early as 4 months old.

**For premature babies** (babies who are born early): Premature babies may be able to start solids earlier than 6 months corrected age. It is important that you consider their corrected age and development when starting them on baby foods.

For more information about when to start your baby on solid foods, talk to your doctor or dietitian.

It is important to start with solid foods containing high amounts of iron first. Your baby uses iron for growth and development, especially for their brain and red blood cells. Your baby is born with iron stored in their body, but they use this iron up by 4 to 6 months of age. Feeding them iron-rich foods will continue to give them the iron that they need.
Is my baby ready for solid foods?

At about 6 months old, breast milk (or infant formula) is still the most important food for your baby, but now they will likely be ready to eat solid foods too. Start watching for signs that they are ready to do so. They will be more interested in eating if you both enjoy the process and if they are playing an active role in the feeding.

Your baby is ready to eat solids when they:

- Are about 6 months old
- Use their neck muscles to hold their head up straight
- Sit up in a feeding chair
- Put their fingers or toys in their mouth
- Open their mouth wide when you offer food on a spoon
- Keep their tongue flat and low so the spoon can go into their mouth
- Turn their face away if they do not want food
- Close their lips over the spoon, keep the food in their mouth and swallow it instead of pushing it out.

While you should make sure they show all these signs of readiness before you start solid foods, do not wait too long to start. You may miss the developmental period that happens as they start learning to eat solid foods. This may cause feeding problems later.

Solids give your baby the chance to learn new flavours (tastes) and textures. At first, your baby will start to eat puréed foods, then move to lumpy and thicker textures, before learning to eat small pieces of solid foods. By the end of the first year, they will be enjoying family meals and foods, using their fingers to pick up soft pieces of food, and drinking from a cup.

Learning to eat is a gradual transition led by your baby and taught by you.

Enjoy every moment!
When do I feed my baby?

- Continue to breast feed (or bottle feed) throughout the day.
- Give them solid food before or after they drink breast milk (or infant formula).
- Feed them when they are happy and hungry.
- You may want to start new foods in the morning or at lunch.
- Include your baby at family meals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNS OF HUNGER</th>
<th>SIGNS OF FULLNESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Excited or happy to be in high chair</td>
<td>• Turns head away when sees spoon or food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leans forward or reaches for food</td>
<td>• Closes mouth when sees spoon or food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sucks or smacks lips</td>
<td>• Covers mouth with hands or fists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opens mouth when sees food</td>
<td>• Fusses or cries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Puts fist in mouth or cries.</td>
<td>• Falls asleep.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which foods do I start with?

Start with **iron-rich foods**, such as:

- ✔ Iron-fortified baby (infant) cereals
- ✔ Meat or Poultry such as beef, lamb, pork, chicken, turkey
- ✔ Fish

- ✔ Eggs
- ✔ Tofu
- ✔ Well-cooked legumes such as beans, lentils, and chickpeas.

How do I introduce foods to my baby?

- When you first offer food to your baby, do not give more than one common food allergen a day.
- As you introduce new foods, watch for signs of allergy.
- Make sure the size and texture of the food is appropriate for your baby’s age.
- Continue to offer common food allergens on a regular basis so your baby can develop the ability to tolerate that food. **Tolerance** is the opposite of allergy. One or 2 feedings may not be enough to create a tolerance for that food.

People can be allergic to any food, but some allergies are more common than others. The more common food allergens are eggs, milk, mustard, peanuts, seafood, sesame, soy, sulphites, tree nuts, and wheat.
How should I prepare the foods to feed my growing baby?

As your baby grows and develops, feed your baby age appropriate textures. The following will guide you through the stages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE (MONTH)</th>
<th>DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE</th>
<th>FOOD TEXTURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>• Holds head up</td>
<td>• Strained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sits with little help</td>
<td>• Puréed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>• Opens mouth when food is offered</td>
<td>• Smooth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>• Reaches out and is curious about food</td>
<td>• Mashed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>• Is able to take food from a spoon</td>
<td>• Grated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>• Is able to move food to back of mouth with tongue</td>
<td>• Minced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>• Can turn head away to refuse foods</td>
<td>• Lumpy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>• Begins a chewing motion</td>
<td>• Diced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How do I feed my baby?

#### SIT TOGETHER FACE-TO-FACE
- Put them in a highchair or feeding chair.
- Allow them to sit up straight, facing forward.
- Use the safety belt.
- Face each other - you sit directly in front of your baby.
- Talk to your baby to keep them company, but do not be exciting or entertaining. Keep the mood calm and happy.

It is safest to feed your baby in a feeding chair or high chair with safety belt. Never leave your baby alone.

#### LET YOUR BABY TAKE THE LEAD
- Put a small amount of food on the tip of a small spoon.
- Hold the spoon for your baby to see it.
- You can put some food on their lip if they do not open their mouth.
- Wait for their mouth to open when you offer food.
- Allow them to take the lead.

If they do not swallow the food, they may not be ready. Try again another day.

#### LET YOUR BABY SET THE PACE
- Feed as slowly or as quickly as they want.
- Stop when they seem full.
- Do not force them.
- They do not need to finish what you made.

Allow plenty of time for feeding. Do not rush. Both you and baby should be relaxed and happy at mealtimes. Eat together.

#### LET YOUR BABY PLAY WITH THE FOOD
- They like to touch and feel their food. Let them! Allow them to touch the food. This helps them become more familiar with new foods.
- They like to make a mess. This helps them learn.

#### GO SLOW WITH NEW FOODS
- Do not worry if they do not like a new food today. Try again another time.
- Keep trying new foods, while continuing to feed them foods they already like.
- Just because you do not like a food, does not mean they won’t like it too.
How much food should I give my baby?

Babies have small stomachs and need small amounts of foods at a time. Start by offering 1 to 2 teaspoons (5 to 10 mL) of food and gradually give more as baby accepts it.

Does my baby need vitamins?

Like all kinds of milk, breast milk, and sometimes formula, do not have enough vitamin D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVERYDAY YOUR BABY DRINKS:</th>
<th>GIVE YOUR BABY THIS MUCH VITAMIN D EACH DAY:</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only breast milk</td>
<td>400 IU (International Units)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 500 mL of formula</td>
<td>400 IU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 500 mL to 1000 mL of formula</td>
<td>200 IU (Or you can give baby 400 IU every other day)</td>
<td>If you are partially breastfeeding your baby, the recommended amount of vitamin D supplement your baby should have depends on the amount of formula you are giving your baby. This is because infant formula contains some vitamin D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 mL or more of formula</td>
<td>You do not need to give additional vitamin D.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Healthy Habits

When a family eats together, babies learn that meal times are a special time to come together and share. Babies learn by watching others around them. Be a healthy role model.

Your baby:

- Needs the time to develop eating skills.
- Needs to explore eating as an experience.
- May take several tries of food before they may like it.
- Needs your attention and eye contact when feeding.
- Has an appetite that may vary day to day. Some days they eat more, sometimes less. That’s okay!

Learn to trust and respect signs of hunger and fullness. They know how much to eat. Remember that every baby will like different foods and eat different amounts of foods.
## INTRODUCING YOUR BABY TO DRINKS

### What should my baby drink from 6 months to one year old?

| **MILK**                      | Continue to feed your baby breast milk (or infant formula).  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Do not</strong> give your baby cow’s milk before they are 9 months to one year old. Talk to your doctor or dietitian before starting cow’s milk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Follow-up or stage 2 formulas are available for babies 6 to 18 months old. The calcium is higher in follow-up formulas compared to infant formula. There is no reason to switch to these formulas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **WATER**                     | Sometimes your baby is not hungry, but is thirsty only. You can give your baby some water when they are thirsty and has already had their feeding. |

| **JUICE**                     | Babies do not need juice. After 6 months, if you choose to give juice, choose 100% unsweetened fruit juice.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Do not</strong> give your baby more than 60 to 120 ml (2 to 4 ounces) of juice a day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You do not need to buy special baby juice, however make sure the juice is pasteurized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Most babies like fruit juice. If you give your baby too much juice, your baby may not drink enough breast milk (or infant formula) and will not get all the nutrition they need to grow and be healthy. Make sure your baby gets all the breast milk, formula, or food they should have before you give your baby juice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If you do give your baby juice, give it in a cup, not in a bottle. This will lower the risk of “baby bottle tooth decay” (rotten teeth).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **OTHER DRINKS**              | **Do not** give your baby coffee, tea, herbal tea, pop, soft drinks, sports drinks, punch, fruit drinks, drinks made from drink crystals, or lemonade.  
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                               | • These drinks are not safe for your baby.  
|                               | • They can also fill up your baby’s stomach. Your baby may not drink enough breast milk (or infant formula) and will not get all the nutrition they need to grow and be healthy. |
Continue to breast feed your baby and start to give iron-rich foods (see summary list on page 3 and below for more details). Babies need to learn to chew, swallow and enjoy the same food the family is eating. They will only need to eat pureéd baby food for a short time.

You can start puréed foods by about 6 months old. Between 6 and 7 months, they can start to move from puréed foods to well mashed, lumpy, and then finely chopped foods. They may be able to eat small, soft cooked pieces of finger foods by about 9 months of age (see summary finger foods list on next page).

1 Start with iron-rich foods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF FOOD</th>
<th>DO</th>
<th>DO NOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Meat and Alternatives | • Cooked meat, chicken, lamb or fish that is moist. Add extra water or broth to cooking. Stewing or poaching works well.  
• Be sure to cook the egg well. Scrambled and mashed hard-boiled eggs are good options.  
• Cook beans, lentils, and chickpeas well.  
• Thinned smooth peanut butter or nut butter. For example, mix 2 tsp (10 mL) of peanut butter with 2 to 3 tsp (10 to 15 mL) of hot water. Stir to dissolve. Let cool. Add more water if needed.  
• Use silken or soft tofu.  
• Choose fish that are low in mercury, such as white fish, salmon, light canned tuna. For more information on fish safety, visit: https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/8d3f-tph-91f6-guide-eat-fish.pdf (Toronto Public Health. Guide to Eating Fish) | • Do NOT give your baby deli meats, wieners, bologna, salami or sausage  
• Do NOT give your baby peanut butter from a spoon. |
| Infant Cereal         | • Start with an iron-fortified, single grain infant cereal. You can offer oats, barley, rice, or wheat.  
• Use mixed grains cereal only after your baby has tried each of the single grains.  
• Mix dry cereal with breast milk. At first, make the cereal thin. As your baby becomes better at eating, make it thicker by adding less breast milk.  
• Some infant cereals have infant formula added. Read the labels. | • Do NOT give your baby adult cereals.  
• Do NOT give your baby cereal in a baby bottle. Always feed cereal from a spoon. |
After your baby has started to eat a variety of iron-rich foods, start to introduce foods such as vegetables, fruits, and milk and alternatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF FOOD</th>
<th>DO</th>
<th>DO NOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables and Fruits</td>
<td>• Try one new vegetable or fruit at a time.</td>
<td>• Do NOT give fruit desserts as they have a lot of sugar. Store-bought baby foods with combination vegetable and meat dinners have little nutrition. If you use them, add extra meat or alternatives to your baby’s meal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wash and peel fresh vegetables and fruit before using.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Give your baby cooked and mashed vegetables and fruit such as squash, peas, sweet potatoes, green or yellow beans, apples, peaches, pears, apricots, plums.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Try mashed bananas, avocados, melon, canned fruits.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Give some pieces of soft fruits and cooked vegetables as your baby gets older.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk and Alternatives</td>
<td>• Breast milk (or infant formula) is still the most important food for your baby. Continue to breastfeed until your baby is 2 years old or older.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Offer sugar-free or plain yogurt or cottage cheese.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Be sure that all milk products are pasteurized.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When they start to change what they are eating, such as beginning to eat solid foods, their bowel movements (poops) will change too. The poops may be more firm, a different colour, size or smell. They may have poops more or less often. If you are concerned about their poops, contact their doctor.

How do I feed my baby finger foods?

By 7 to 9 months, they will want to start to feed themselves. Encourage them to self-feed using finger foods as soon as they seem interested. Continue to offer food from a spoon as they are learning to eat.

Some examples of finger foods are:

- Soft, ripe, peeled fruit cut into very small bite-sized pieces or strips (banana, pear, peaches, plums, mango, cantaloupe, melon, kiwi)
- Quartered grapes, pieces of strawberries, blueberries
- Soft, cooked vegetables pieces, cut into small pieces or into strips (carrots, sweet potato, turnip, zucchini, cauliflower, broccoli)
- Dry toast strips, crackers
- Unsweetened cereals
- Shredded cheese, cheese cubes
- Cut-up cooked tender pieces of meat or chicken
- Ground meat (meatball pieces, cut-up meatloaf)
- Cut-up cooked pasta or casserole
- Small pieces of firm tofu
- Cooked beans, lentils, legumes

Finger foods are small pieces of foods that your baby can pick up and bring to their mouth using their fingers.
Sample feeding schedule for my 6 to 9 month old baby

**TIPS:**

- Continue to offer breast milk (or infant formula).
- Feed your baby when they are hungry. Every baby is different and schedules will be different.
- Always have baby sitting down for feeding and be with your baby.
- If they do not eat meat or alternatives, aim for 120 mL (8 tablespoons) of iron-fortified cereal every day by 9 months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EARLY MORNING</strong></td>
<td>Breast milk (or infant formula): 150 to 210 mL (5 to 7 ounces)</td>
<td>Vitamin D supplement if drinking breast milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td>Breast milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 to 30 mL (1 tsp to 2 tbsp) iron-fortified infant cereal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 to 30 mL (1 tsp to 2 tbsp) cooked egg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 to 30 mL (1 tsp to 2 tbsp) mashed fruit such as pear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MORNING SNACK</strong></td>
<td>Breast milk (or infant formula): 150 to 210 mL (5 to 7 ounces)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LUNCH</strong></td>
<td>Breast milk (or infant formula): 150 to 210 mL (5 to 7 ounces)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 to 30 mL (1 tsp to 2 tbsp) iron fortified infant cereal mixed with peanut powder, peanut flour, or thinned smooth nut butter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 to 30 mL (1 tsp to 2 tbsp) mashed vegetable such as yellow beans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 to 30 mL (1 tsp to 2 tbsp) minced chicken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AFTERNOON SNACK</strong></td>
<td>Breast milk (or infant formula): 150 to 210 mL (5 to 7 ounces)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DINNER</strong></td>
<td>Breast milk (or infant formula): 150 to 210 mL (5 to 7 ounces)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 to 30 mL (1 tsp to 2 tbsp) iron fortified infant cereal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 to 30 mL (1 tsp to 2 tbsp) mashed fruit such as peaches or banana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 to 30 mL (1 tsp to 2 tbsp) minced meat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVENING SNACK</strong></td>
<td>Breast milk (or infant formula): 150 to 210 mL (5 to 7 ounces)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How many meals and snacks a day does my baby need?**

As they start getting used to eating solids, your baby may only eat a few meals a day. At 6 to 9 months of age, offer 1 to 3 meals each day.
As your baby gets older, continue to increase the texture and variety of foods you offer. When they are eating a variety of solid foods, give breast milk (or infant formula) after solid foods at mealtimes.

When your baby can pick things up with their thumb and forefinger (pincer grasp), this is a good time to offer small pieces of table foods or “finger foods” for snack and at mealtimes.

Let them feed themselves with their hands or a baby spoon. Expect a mess. This is how they learn to eat well. Make sure their hands are clean before eating. There is no need to wipe while they are eating.

To keep your baby safe, be sure to know which foods to avoid (see page 16 - Foods that can cause choking).

Turn off the TV or computer and any distractions such as toys or books. Eating is a time of learning. Distractions while eating or feeding can cause difficulty with feeding and over time, may lead to picky eating. Eat together. Babies learn by watching others.

By one year of age, your baby should be eating table food that the rest of the family is enjoying. You should not have to cook a separate meal. They should be eating bite-sized pieces of food. They should be eating a variety of foods from all food groups and drinking liquids from a cup. They do not need a baby bottle.

- Offer vegetables and fruits that the rest of the family is eating.

FOOD GROUP | TIPS
--- | ---
Vegetables and Fruit | • Offer vegetables and fruits that the rest of the family is eating.
Grain Products | • Continue to give iron-fortified infant cereal.
 | • If you wish, mix infant cereal with other foods, such as fruit or vegetables.
 | • Offer finger foods such as:
 | • Pieces of bagel
 | • Dry toast strips
 | • Roti, naan, chapati
 | • Noodles
 | • Cooked pasta
 | • Unsalted crackers
 | • Baby biscuits
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOD GROUP</th>
<th>TIPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Milk and Alternatives       | • Breast milk (or infant formula) is still the most important food for your baby. Continue to breast feed until your baby is 2 years old or older.  
• If your baby is eating a variety of iron-rich foods (such as, fortified infant cereal, meat, poultry, fish, beans and eggs) at most mealtimes, you can offer your baby homogenized (whole fat homogenized / 3.25% M.F.) cow’s milk.  
• If they are not eating a variety of foods that contain iron, then do not start feeding them whole fat (homogenized / 3.25% M.F.) milk. Keep giving them breast milk (or infant formula with iron) and continue offering them iron-rich foods.  
• When you have weaned your baby to whole fat (homogenized / 3.25% M.F.) milk, continue with this milk until your baby is 2 years old. Then, you can switch to lower-fat milk.  
• Give milk in a cup.  
• Offer sugar-free or plain yogurt, cottage cheese, and small cubes or soft cheese or shredded cheese.  
• Be sure that all milk products are pasteurized.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Meat and Alternatives       | Offer:  
• Bite-sized pieces of tender boneless cooked meat, such as chicken, beef, lamb, pork, or fish  
• Cooked eggs such as scrambled eggs, omelet or hard-boiled eggs  
• You can mix peanut powder, peanut flour, or peanut, nut, or seed butters into foods such as cereal, fruits and vegetables  
• Well-cooked, soft beans, lentils, chickpeas  
• Plain tofu (fortified)  
• Thinly spread peanut butter or other nut butters on toast or crackers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

**Do not** give your baby soy or rice drinks in the first 2 years of life. They do not have enough protein, healthy fat, or calories to help babies grow and develop. Soy-based infant formula is okay to give to your baby, as recommended by your doctor.

**Do not** give your baby unpasteurized milk (milk that has not been treated to get rid of germs). Unpasteurized milk can cause diarrhea and other serious health problems.
**Sample feeding schedule for older babies (about 9 to 12 months old)**

### TIPS:
- Feed your baby when they are hungry. Every baby is different and schedules will be different.
- Always have baby sitting down for feeding and be with your baby.
- When your baby is eating a variety of solid foods, give breast milk (or infant formula) **after** solid foods at mealtimes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Meal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **BREAKFAST** | Breast milk (or infant formula): 180 to 250 mL (6 to 8 ounces)  
60 to 90 mL (4 to 6 tbsp) iron-fortified infant cereal  
30 to 60 mL (2 to 4 tbsp) fruit |
| **MORNING SNACK** | 60 mL (1/4 cup) Cheerios® or 1/4 piece of toast with thinly spread peanut butter  
Breast milk |
| **LUNCH** | 30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 tbsp) of meat or alternative such as chicken or lentils  
30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 tbsp) vegetables such as yellow beans  
60 to 90 mL (4 to 6 tbsp) potato, rice, pasta, or cut up noodles  
30 to 60 mL (2 to 4 tbsp) fruit  
Breast milk (or infant formula): 180 to 250 mL (6 to 8 ounces) |
| **AFTERNOON SNACK** | 30 to 60 mL (2 to 4 tbsp) yogurt or cheese  
Water |
| **DINNER** | 30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 tbsp) of meat or alternative such as chicken or lentils  
30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 tbsp) vegetables such as green peas  
60 to 90 mL (4 to 6 tbsp) cut up noodles, pasta, potato or rice  
30 to 60 mL (2 to 4 tbsp) fruit  
Breast milk (or infant formula): 180 to 250 mL (6 to 8 ounces) |
| **EVENING SNACK** | 60 to 90 mL (4 to 6 tbsp) iron-fortified infant cereal  
Breast milk (or infant formula): 180 to 250 mL (6 to 8 ounces) |

**How many meals and snacks a day does my baby need?**
- At 9 to 11 months old - Offer 2 to 3 meals and 1 to 2 snacks each day
- At 12 months old - Offer 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks each day
What do I need to know about food allergies?

- It is **NOT** recommended to wait to start a specific food to prevent a food allergy, even if other siblings or a parent have food or other allergies.
- Waiting to introduce foods such as egg, peanut, or fish **does not** prevent food allergy. It most likely increases the risk of developing food allergy.
- Continue to offer these foods on a regular basis, at least one time a week.
- Feeding safe peanut foods 3 times a week gives your baby the lowest risk for peanut allergy. For more information, speak with your doctor or allergist.

What are some general tips to keep my baby safe during feedings?

- Be very careful if you heat your baby’s food in the microwave. Before serving it to your baby, stir the food well and check the temperature carefully.
- Check that your baby’s high chair is stable and secure. Always use the safety belt.
- **Do not** hold your baby when you are eating or drinking anything hot.
- Babies can choke easily. Always stay with your baby while eating.

Preventing Tooth Decay in Baby’s Teeth

Before baby’s teeth appear, wipe their gums with a soft cloth. To prevent tooth decay (rotten teeth) as soon as baby’s teeth appear:

- Begin brushing each day with a baby toothbrush, especially before sleeping.
- Check baby’s teeth often for signs of tooth decay (white lines along the gum line or brown spots).
- Talk to your doctor or dental-health professional for specific fluoride recommendations.
- Always stay with your baby during feeding, and do not use a propped bottle.
- Do not give your baby bottles of milk at sleep time without brushing afterwards.
- Do not give bottles to your baby while they are sleeping.
- Avoid giving juice or other sweet drinks, especially from a bottle.
- Begin to work on using an open cup at around 6 months of age. If your baby drinks from a baby bottle, aim to transition to all cup feedings by about 1 year old.

If your child is at risk of developing an allergy, talk to your doctor about how and when to introduce solids.

Signs of allergy are:

- Itchy mouth and throat when eating certain food
- Hives (raised red, itchy bumps on the skin)
- Stomach trouble (diarrhea, vomiting)
- Swelling of the face or tongue, or
- Breathing problems

Stop feeding the food if it causes any of these problems. Talk to your doctor.
What are some safe food handling tips?

Young children and infants are at more of a risk from getting sick from food poisoning. This is because their immune systems are still developing and they are not as ready to fight off infections as adults are.


### FOOD HANDLING SAFETY TIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Separate</th>
<th>• Keep raw meat, chicken, fish and seafood separate from ready-to-eat foods such as fruits and vegetables in the fridge and in your grocery carts to avoid cross-contamination.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clean</td>
<td>• Wash your hands with warm, soapy water before preparing food, before and after feeding your baby, after changing their diaper and after touching pets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Clean all surfaces, utensils, equipment with hot water and soap before and after preparing food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rinse fruits and vegetables under cold running drinkable water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wash your baby’s hands and face before and after eating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chill</td>
<td>• Defrost raw meat, chicken, fish and seafood in the fridge, microwave or in cold water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Do not</strong> refreeze thawed foods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Store raw meat, chicken, fish or seafood right away in fridge or freezer at the right temperatures. Fridge should be set to 4°C (40°F) or lower and freezer at -18°C (0°F) or lower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Store cut-up fruit and vegetables in the fridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Store leftovers in the fridge, as soon as possible; at least within 2 hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Throw away any leftovers that baby has started to eat but not finished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>• Be sure to cook your food thoroughly and safely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Check the internal temperature of meat, chicken, fish, seafood and leftovers using a digital food thermometer to avoid food poisoning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Safe Internal Cooking Temperatures:

| Beef, veal and lamb (pieces and whole cuts) | 77°C (170°F) |
| Ground meat (beef, veal, lamb, pork) | 71°C (160°F) |
| Ground meat (poultry - chicken, turkey) | 74°C (165°F) |
| Poultry pieces (chicken, turkey, duck) | 74°C (165°F) |
| Poultry whole (chicken, turkey, duck) | 85°C (185°F) |
| Pork | 71°C (160°F) |
| Egg dishes | 74°C (165°F) |
| Others (stuffing, seafood) | 74°C (165°F) |

© All rights reserved. Safe Food Handling for Children 5 and Under. Health Canada, 2012. Modified with permission from the Minister of Health, 2013.
What foods are unsafe for my baby to eat?

Foods high in mercury: Do not give your baby swordfish, shark, fresh or frozen tuna steak, canned albacore (white) tuna, marlin, orange roughy or escolar more than once a month - These fish are often high in mercury. For more information on fish safety visit: https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/8d3f-tph-91f6-guide-eat-fish.pdf (Source: Toronto Public Health. Guide to Eating Fish)

Foods high in sodium (salt) or sugar: Avoid giving your baby foods that are high in sodium (salt) and sugar. Too much salt is hard on their kidneys. Sugary foods and drinks do not give them the nutrition they need, can cause excess weight gain and can cause tooth decay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOODS TO AVOID THAT ARE HIGH IN SALT OR SUGAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Soft drinks (such as ginger ale, cola, Sprite®, iced tea, sports drinks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pickles, olives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chips, Cheesies®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foods that can cause choking: Certain food textures can cause choking. As your baby learns to chew and swallow, they may gag or spit out the food, and this is normal. Choking, however, is dangerous. Change foods that can cause choking to make them safer or do not give them to your baby at all. Be sure to learn what to do if your baby is choking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOODS THAT CAN CAUSE CHOKING</th>
<th>HOW TO MAKE THEM SAFER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stringy, melted cheese</td>
<td>Give cut up or shredded pieces of cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long pasta</td>
<td>Cut up noodles, small pasta pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foods that stick (cheese spread, cream cheese, peanut butter, nut and seed butters)</td>
<td>Spread thinly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mix into foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mix peanut butter, nut and seed butter with water to thin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round small fruits (grapes, cherries)</td>
<td>Cut into four parts, remove pit or seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot dogs, wiener, sausages</td>
<td>Avoid giving. If you choose to, cut lengthwise and then again into bite-sized pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw vegetables or fruit that are hard</td>
<td>Cook to soften or offer grated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw baby carrots</td>
<td>Cook to soften, cut lengthwise and then again into small bite-sized pieces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following foods are also choking hazards to children of any age: Hard candies, nuts, seeds, popcorn, fish with bones, raisins, gum, snacks with toothpicks or skewers
Foods that can cause food poisoning: Avoid feeding your baby foods that can cause food poisoning. The following are unsafe for your baby:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF FOOD</th>
<th>FOOD TO AVOID</th>
<th>SAFER ALTERNATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dairy Products</td>
<td>• Raw or unpasteurized milk.</td>
<td>• Pasteurized milk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
<td>• Honey or corn syrup to infants who are less than one year old, either added to baby food or used on a soother. They can cause infant botulism.</td>
<td>• Wait until your child is older than one year. If you are looking for a way to quiet a fussy or colicky baby, ask your doctor for some alternative methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg and Egg Products</td>
<td>• Raw or lightly cooked eggs or egg products, including salad dressings, cookie dough or cake batter, sauces and drinks such as homemade eggnog</td>
<td>• Egg dishes thoroughly cooked to a safe internal temperature. Eggs should be cooked until the yolk is firm. Homemade eggnog must be heated to 71°C (160°F).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafood</td>
<td>• Raw oysters, clams and mussels.</td>
<td>• Cook until the shell has opened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>• Swordfish, shark, fresh or frozen tuna steak, canned albacore (white) tuna, marlin, orange roughy or escolar – do not give more than once a month. These fish are often high in mercury.</td>
<td>• For more information on fish safety visit: <a href="https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/8d3f-tph-91f6-guide-eat-fish.pdf">https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/8d3f-tph-91f6-guide-eat-fish.pdf</a> (Toronto Public Health. Guide to Eating Fish)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat and Poultry</td>
<td>• Raw or undercooked meat or poultry such as steak tartare.</td>
<td>• Meat and poultry cooked to a safe internal temperature. (Refer to the Internal Cooking Temperatures Chart on pg. 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Juice and Cider</td>
<td>• Unpasteurized fruit juice and cider.</td>
<td>• Unpasteurized fruit juice and cider brought to a rolling boil and cooled. Pasteurized fruit juice and cider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprouts</td>
<td>• Raw sprouts such as alfalfa, clover, radish and mung beans.</td>
<td>• Thoroughly cooked sprouts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© All rights reserved. Safe Food Handling for Children 5 and Under. Health Canada, 2012. Modified and reproduced with permission from the Minister of Health, 2013.
Can I make my own baby food?

Yes. It is easy to make your own baby food. You can use the same healthy foods you and your family eat. Homemade baby food is healthy for your baby. It also:

- Saves you money
- Lets them try a greater variety of foods
- Helps them get used to different textures and tastes
- Lets them eat the same foods as your family.

You can make baby food at each meal or ahead of time and store it in the fridge or freezer.

You will not need puréed or blended foods for long. At about seven months old, most babies will be eating mashed table foods and quickly move on to soft pieces of table food.

How do I make baby food?

To make baby food you will need one of the following:

- A food blender or
- A baby food mill (grinder) or
- A wire sieve and a clean spoon or
- A potato masher or
- A fork

INSTRUCTIONS:

1 **Be clean**
   - Wash your hands with warm, soapy water before you prepare food.
   - Clean all surfaces and equipment with hot water and soap.

2 **Choose fresh or frozen foods**
   - Do not use canned foods as they have too much salt for your baby.
### Prepare the foods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOD</th>
<th>HOW TO PREPARE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Vegetables and Fruit  | • Wash, peel, pit and/or seed.  
• Cut into smaller pieces.  
• Steam or boil until soft.  
• Drain and save the cooking water.  
• Mash or blend. You may need to use some cooking water to get the right texture.  
• You can mash banana, papaya, avocado and melon without cooking them.  
• **Do not** add sugar, salt, butter or margarine to the food. Baby does not need these. |
| Meat and Fish         | • Boil, roast, or bake until the meat separates easily from the bones or the fish flakes easily with a fork.  
• Remove bones and skin, trim off the fat.  
• Cut meat or flake fish into small pieces.  
• Blend. You may need to use some cooking water to get the right texture.  
• Do not add sugar, salt, butter or margarine to the food. Baby does not need these. |
| Meat Alternatives     | • Cook legumes such a beans, lentils and chickpeas according to package directions. Cook egg yolk. Use plain tofu.  
• Blend with a little water or mash with a fork.  
• Thinned smooth peanut butter or nut butter. For example, mix 10 mL (2 tsp) of peanut butter with 10 to 15 mL (2 to 3 tsp) of hot water. Stir to dissolve. Let cool. Add more water if needed. |

### Store the prepared foods

- Store prepared baby food in a covered container. You can store in the refrigerator for 2 days.
- You can freeze homemade baby food. Pour pureed food into an ice cube tray. Thaw frozen cubes in the refrigerator before using.
- You can store homemade baby food in a refrigerator freezer for 2 months or deep freezer for 6 months.
If you have questions about feeding your baby, please contact:

**Humber River Hospital**
Maternal and Child Program
Web: [http://www.hrh.ca](http://www.hrh.ca)

**Registered Dietitian**
Tel: (416) 242-1000 ext. 21416

**Prenatal Outpatient Clinic**
Tel: (416) 242-1000 ext. 21450

**La Leche League Canada**
Breastfeeding line for a referral to someone in your community
Toll-free: 1 (800) 665-4324
Web: [https://www.lllc.ca/](https://www.lllc.ca/)

**Unlock Food**
Web: [https://www.unlockfood.ca](https://www.unlockfood.ca)

**Telehealth Ontario**
Speak with a dietitian.
Toll-free: 1 (866) 797-0000

**Toronto Public Health**
Tel: (416) 338-7600
Web: [https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/](https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/)

© 2019 Humber River Hospital. All rights reserved.

The information provided in this handout is for educational purposes. It does not replace the advice or specific instructions from your doctor, nurse, or other healthcare provider. Do not use this information to diagnose or treat. If you have questions about your own care, please speak with your healthcare provider.