

A GUIDE TO FEEDING YOUR BABY FOR THE FIRST TWO YEARS



Airplane Choo Choo

Every baby is unique; don't worry if your baby eats a little more or less than this guide suggests. Keep in mind that the suggested serving sizes are only guidelines to help you get started.*



Typical Portion Sizes and Daily Servings for Children 0-24 months^{1,2,3,4,5}

Age (months)	Food Group	Foods Options (Serving Size)	Servings Per Day	Not Recommended
0-6 months 0 6	Breast Milk or Iron-Fortified Infant Formula	Breast milk (recommended) or iron-fortified infant formula should be your baby's sole source of nutrition for the first six months of life. Work with your pediatrician to track feeding patterns to ensure your infant is eating enough for growth.		Food or beverage other than breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula
6-8 months 6 8	Breast Milk or Iron-Fortified Infant Formula	Breast milk (recommended) or iron-fortified infant formula should be a major source of nutrition during this period of your baby's life. Work with your pediatrician to track feeding patterns to ensure your infant is eating enough for growth.		
	Dairy	Plain whole milk yogurt, including soy-based yogurt, or cheese	Can start to introduce	Cow's milk or fortified soy beverage; sweetened yogurt; unpasteurized (raw) milk, yogurt and cheese
	Grain**	Iron-fortified infant cereal (2-4 Tbsp.) Crackers (2) or bread (1/2 slice)**	2 servings 1 serving	Popcorn
	Fruit or Vegetables	Strained or pureed fruit and vegetables (2-3 Tbsp.)	1-2 servings	Raisins, whole grapes, dried, hard, raw fruits (e.g., apples) Dried, hard, raw vegetables (e.g., green beans)
	Protein	Strained or pureed meat (1-2 Tbsp.) Beans (1-2 Tbsp.)	1-2 servings	Uncut stringy meats, hot dog pieces or peanuts/peanut butter
	Beverage	Plain, fluoridated water	Up to 4-8 ounces	Plant-based milk alternatives; sports, energy or soft drinks; tea; lemonade; caffeinated beverages; fruit juice

*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).

**Choose whole grain more often.



Typical Portion Sizes and Daily Servings for Children 0-24 months^{1,2,3,4,5}

Age (months)	Food Group	Foods Options (Serving Size)	Servings Per Day	Not Recommended
8-12 months <div>8</div> <div>12</div>	Breast Milk or Iron-Fortified Infant Formula	Breast milk (recommended) or iron-fortified infant formula should be a major source of nutrition for the first twelve months of life. Work with your pediatrician to track feeding patterns to ensure your infant is eating enough for growth.		
	Dairy	Plain whole milk yogurt including soy-based yogurt (1/2 c.), cheese (1/2 oz.)	1 serving	Cow's milk or fortified soy beverage; sweetened yogurt; unpasteurized (raw) milk, yogurt and cheese
	Grain**	Iron-fortified infant cereal (2-4 Tbsp.), bread (1/2 slice), crackers (2) or pasta (3-4 Tbsp.)**	2 servings	Popcorn, baked goods
	Fruit or Vegetables	Strained or pureed fruit and vegetables (3-4 Tbsp.)	2-3 servings	Raisins, whole grapes, dried, hard, raw fruits or vegetables (e.g., apples, green beans)
	Protein	Strained or pureed meat (3-4 Tbsp.) and beans (1/4 c.)	2 servings	Uncut stringy meats, hot dog pieces or peanuts/peanut butter
	Beverage	Plain, fluoridated water	Up to 4-8 ounces	Plant-based milk alternatives; sports, energy or soft drinks; tea; lemonade; caffeinated beverages; fruit juice
12-24 months <div>12</div> <div>24</div>	Breast Milk	Breastfeeding may be continued as long as mutually desired by both mother and child.		
	Dairy	Plain whole milk ^a or fortified unsweetened soy beverage (1/2 c.), cheese (1/2 oz.) or yogurt (1/2 c.)	4-5 servings	Non-fat and flavored milk; unpasteurized (raw) milk, yogurt and cheese
	Grain**	Bread (1/4-1/2 slice), bagel/bun (1/4-1/2), ready-to-eat cereal (1/3-1/2 c.), cooked cereal (1/4-1/2 c.), or rice/pasta (1/4-1/3 c.)**	6 servings	Fried pastries and cereal mixes
	Fruit	Whole fruit (1/2 small), cooked, canned (in own juice) or chopped (1/4-1/3 c.), or berries (1/3-1/2 c.)	2-3 servings	Difficult to chew whole fresh fruits, especially those with peels; dried fruits, whole grapes and raisins
	Vegetables	Cooked, canned or fresh chopped (1/4-1/3 c.)	2-3 servings	Difficult to chew fresh vegetables, especially those with peels
	Protein	Beef, pork, poultry or fish (1-3 Tbsp.), beans, pulses or chopped nuts (2-4 Tbsp.), or egg (1 small)	2 servings	Undercooked meat served in chunks larger than 1/4-inch pieces; whole nuts, hot dogs, raw or undercooked eggs
	Beverage	Plain, fluoridated water	Enough to meet hydration and fluoride needs; consult your pediatrician for specific advice	Plant-based milk alternatives; sports, energy or soft drinks; tea; lemonade; caffeinated beverages; toddler milks/drinks; 100% fruit juice (no more than 4 oz. per day); juice drinks that contain added sugars

**Choose whole grain more often.

^aAfter 24 months: low-fat milk (1%) can be considered if growth and weight appropriate.



Airplane Choo Choo FEEDING TIPS FOR 0-6 MONTHS

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for approximately the first six months of life and continuation after complementary foods have been introduced for at least the first year of life and beyond, as long as mutually desired by mother and child.⁴ If breastfeeding is not an option, iron-fortified infant formula will meet the needs of full-term healthy babies for the first 6 months of life.⁴



Breast Feeding Tips*

- Plan to begin nursing your newborn within the first hour of birth.⁴
- Work with your pediatrician to track your baby's feeding patterns to ensure the infant is eating enough for growth. Breast fed infants should be supplemented with vitamin D.⁴

Storage Tips

- When away from your baby continue to pump at regular feeding times and refrigerate the milk within 4 hours.^{2,5}
- Refrigerated breast milk should be used within 4 days of collection. If milk will not be fed within 24 hours freeze it.⁶
- Breast milk can be frozen for up to 9 months. Thaw frozen milk under warm running water.⁶
- Thawed breast milk can be stored in a refrigerator, but must be used within 24 hours or discarded.⁶

Formula Feeding Tips*

- Iron-fortified infant formula is the most appropriate substitute feeding for full-term healthy infants during the first year of life, who are not breast-fed.⁴
- Work with your pediatrician to track your baby's feeding patterns to ensure the infant is eating enough for growth.
- Your baby knows when they're full; there is no need to force your baby to finish their bottle.⁴

Storage Tips

- Always refrigerate prepared formula in bottles.⁶
- Never heat the bottle in the microwave. The milk can become too hot, even if it only feels warm to the touch. Warm bottles under warm running water or by placing in a bowl of warm water.^{5,6}

Do Not Do

- Do not give your baby cow's milk or other animal milks.
- Do not give your baby plant-based milk alternatives.
- Other than breast milk or pediatrician-approved formulas, you should not be giving your baby any other liquids at 0-6 months.

*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).



Airplane Choo Choo FEEDING TIPS FOR 6-8 MONTHS

Complementary foods can be introduced at approximately 6 months of age.⁴ To provide adequate nutrition, continue to feed your baby breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula while introducing complementary foods. The time that your infant is 6-8 months of age is a critical window for initiating complementary foods because of the developmental processes occurring during this time.⁴



Each baby's readiness for food depends on their rate of development, but generally your baby is ready for food when...^{5,7}

- Your baby has the strength and stability to sit upright alone or with support.
- Your baby has the ability to control their head and neck.
- Your baby is trying to grasp small objects like food or toys.
- Your baby shows interest in food by bringing objects to their mouth.
- Your baby can move food from a spoon into their mouth.
- Your baby is swallowing food rather than pushing it back out onto the chin.

Do Not Do

- Do not give your baby cow's milk or other animal milks.
- Do not give your baby plant-based milk alternatives.

Feeding Tips*^{7,9}

- Introduce one "single-ingredient" new food at a time.
- Offer a variety of different foods. Rest assured that it may take several attempts for your baby to accept a new food.
- Do not use your microwave to heat up your baby's food. It can become too hot.
- Continue to feed your baby breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula through the first year of life.
- Do not feed your baby fruit juice or other beverages including plant-based milk alternatives, soft drinks, coffee, tea or caffeinated beverages.
- Do not put cereal in a bottle without a discussion with your pediatrician.
- You can start feeding your baby in a high chair, but make sure it can't tip over. Be sure to secure your baby with the safety straps.



*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).



Your baby is ready to try a variety of baby cereals and strained fruits and vegetables. You may introduce water in a cup. Do not worry if your baby cannot hold the cup, your infant will get the hang of it.



Introducing First Foods⁴

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends introducing first foods that provide key nutrients such as iron- and zinc-fortified infant cereals or pureed meats as your baby's first food.

- Feed your baby iron- and zinc-fortified baby cereals, not adult cereals.
- Use only single ingredient foods like rice cereal or pureed beef. Wait about 3-5 days before introducing another food to watch for an unhealthy reaction.
- Be patient! Your baby may refuse to eat a new food at first. Offer new foods multiple times; it can take more than 8 times before an infant accepts a new food flavor or texture.

Introducing a Variety of Foods^{4,9}

- Introduce one "single-ingredient" new food at a time and wait several days before adding a new food to be sure there isn't an unhealthy reaction.
- By 7 or 8 months of age, infants should be eating foods from all food groups (grains, meats, fruits, vegetables and dairy) and the variety of foods will continue to grow over the next several months.
- Although many pediatricians recommend offering vegetables before fruits there is no scientific evidence that it will change your baby's preference. Babies are born with a preference for sweets and it is not affected by order of introduction.
- Do not feed your baby fruit juice or other beverages including plant-based milk alternatives, soft drinks, coffee, tea or caffeinated beverages.
- Do not give your baby honey due to risk of botulism.



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Airplane Choo Choo FEEDING TIPS FOR 8-12 MONTHS

Now is a good time to start feeding your baby “finger foods.” Finger foods are preferred after 9 months of age because they are small and bite-sized. They work well to help your baby learn how to feed themselves instead of being spoon-fed because effective handling of a spoon does not develop until after 12 months of age.⁴ Respect the pace of your baby’s development to new taste and texture. Encourage them to experience the feel, the smell and taste of new foods to improve their development. The American Academy of Pediatrics encourages the consumption of meats, vegetables high in iron and cereals that are iron- and zinc-fortified.⁴ If you haven’t already, begin to introduce meat to your baby during these months because it is a good source of iron and zinc.



The Importance of Meats*⁴

- Meats offer easily absorbed iron and zinc that are important for your baby’s growth. Offer meats daily. If you choose to feed your baby a vegetarian diet, talk to your pediatrician about how to meet recommended iron and zinc intakes.
- Feed your baby strained meats or make your own soft/pureed meats in the blender or food grinder.
- Only introduce single-ingredient soft/pureed meats like chicken, turkey, beef or pork. Wait 3-5 days and watch for an unhealthy reaction.
- Offer your baby 3-4 Tbsp. of meat 2 times a day.

Do Not Do

- Do not give your baby cow’s milk or other animal milks.
- Do not give your baby plant-based milk alternatives.

Feeding Tips*^{4,5,9}

- When your baby can sit up and bring their hands to their mouth, give your baby soft, easy to swallow finger foods or give a baby-size spoon and let them try to feed themselves.
- Be patient. Babies will make a mess when they feed themselves because they are learning new skills.
- Always check warmed foods before serving them to your baby to make sure they are not too hot.
- Avoid foods that your baby could choke on such as grapes, hot dogs, nuts, raisins, raw carrots, popcorn, hard candies, chunks of peanut butter and seeds.
- Do not feed your baby fruit juice or other beverages including plant-based milk alternatives, soft drinks, coffee, tea or caffeinated beverages.
- Do not give your baby honey due to risk of botulism.



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Airplane Choo Choo FEEDING TIPS FOR 12-24 MONTHS

Your baby is a toddler and is eating foods with high nutrient content (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and dairy) because a variety of healthy food promotes good nutrition. Your baby grew very fast during the first year and needed to eat more food. After the first year, growth begins to taper off so their appetite can decrease and their food intake may appear irregular and unpredictable.⁴



Introducing Milk*⁴

- Serve your toddler plain whole milk. Most toddlers need the extra calories from the fat to make sure they have enough nutrients for growth and development.
- During the second year of life, low-fat milk may be considered if growth and weight gain are appropriate, or especially if weight gain is excessive, family history is positive for obesity, dyslipidemia (high cholesterol) or cardiovascular disease. Consult your pediatrician.
- Encourage your toddler to drink milk from a sippy-cup instead of a bottle to help with cup drinking skills needed for transition to an open cup.
- If your toddler cannot tolerate cow's milk, talk to your pediatrician about alternatives.

Feeding Tips*^{4,9}

- Toddlers can be picky eaters, so offer small portions and never force them to clean their plate.
- Be patient if your toddler goes on "food jags." Keep trying to offer small amounts of new and previously rejected foods, but never force your toddler to eat them. It can take from 8 to 10 times of trying a new food, before a child will eat it.
- Your toddler has the skills to participate in family meals.
- Your toddler is ready to consume most of the same foods offered to the rest of the family.
- Let your toddler sit at the table in a booster seat to feel like a part of the family.
- Offer your toddler 3 regular meals and 2-3 snacks a day that are 2-3 hours before a meal.
- Do not feed your baby more than 4 oz. of fruit juice per day or other beverages including plant-based milk alternatives, soft drinks, coffee, tea or caffeinated beverages.

The importance of role modeling – Caregivers should serve as role models by eating the same healthy foods that they want their infants and toddlers to learn to accept and like.⁸

The following foods are hard for children to chew without a full set of teeth. They could cause your child to choke. Offer these foods **only** when the child can chew and swallow well. All finger foods should be small, bite-sized foods. Watch your child closely when eating them. Never leave your child alone while eating.

- Hot dogs
- Apple chunks or slices
- Hard candies
- Whole grapes
- Popcorn
- Chunks of meat or cheese
- Peanut butter
- Whole nuts/seeds
- Raw vegetables

*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).

Airplane Choo Choo Healthy Eating Behaviors

Feeding your baby is not always easy, but it is important to encourage healthy eating habits. As parents/caregivers, you are important role models. To help your child develop healthy eating habits now and in the future, strive to model healthy eating habits yourself. For your baby, healthy eating habits begin with the very first foods and continue throughout childhood. Healthy eating habits are an important foundation for health throughout the lifespan.



Your Role in Feeding*

- Provide a variety of healthy food options for your baby with every meal or snack.
- Determine where you will eat. Encourage family meals at home.

Your Baby's Role in Feeding*

- Determine how much and when they want to eat. Your baby will eat when hungry and stop when full.

Tips to Encourage Healthy Eating Habits

- Encourage a well-balanced meal that is appropriate for your baby's age. Offer foods with high nutrient content like; fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and dairy.
- Offer a variety of healthy foods and limit unhealthy food availability in the home.
- Avoid excessive control and don't pressure your child to eat. Children know when they are full and ready to stop eating.
- Have regular family meals and encourage healthy eating habits by modeling good eating behaviors at each meal.
- Encourage your child to try new foods by offering a variety of foods every day.
- Water or milk should be the beverages offered to children.
- Do not feed your baby fruit juice or other beverages including plant-based milk alternatives, soft drinks, coffee, tea or caffeinated beverages.
- Offer meals and snacks around the same time every day to create a meal schedule.
- Refrain from offering sugar-sweetened or low-calorie beverages other than plain milk and water.
- Turn off the TV when eating meals to help your child be more in tune with their body's feeding signals.
- Offer your child appropriate portion sizes (see pages 1-2 of this guide).
- Refrain from rewarding your child with food.

*Consult your pediatrician for specific questions on feeding your child (timing, amounts, etc.).



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