FEEDING YOUR BABY
7-9 MONTHS OLD

What Foods Come Next

By 6 months old, your baby has probably started to eat infant cereal. It is important to remember to only introduce new foods when baby is ready. Judge when to introduce new foods by what your baby can do and not by how old your baby is. Use the following chart as a guide to introducing new foods.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>When Your Baby Can</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Sit without support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Begin to chew.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use a cup with help.</td>
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<td>• Grasp and hold onto things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Begin</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Strained or pureed fruits and vegetables.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Offer teething foods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Begin</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Water at each feeding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 100% fruit juices (Offer juice from a cup only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Begin</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Soft finger foods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Strained or pureed meat, chicken, beans, egg yolk.</td>
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You and your baby will benefit more by waiting until the time is right to introduce new foods. Your baby will be more capable of eating and digesting new foods. This will mean a happier baby. You will also find feeding a happier experience if you wait until the time is right.
One New Food at a Time

When introducing new foods to your baby, it is important to offer only one new food at a time.

By offering new foods one at a time, a food allergy is easier to spot. You can determine quickly what food caused the reaction. If many foods are offered all at once, it may take longer to find what food caused the allergy. Signs of a food allergy may include vomiting, diarrhea, or skin rash.

By following a few simple steps, you will know what food to blame if there is a problem.

- Offer one new food to your baby.
- Feed the new food every day for a week.
- If your baby is OK with the food after a week, then repeat the process with another food.

Start with a single ingredient food rather than a mixed food. For example offer rice cereal instead of mixed cereal, or applesauce instead of mixed fruit. If your baby does react with a food, stop feeding it right away. Wait at least one month before trying the food again. Your baby will probably outgrow the allergy.

Babies Start to Feed Themselves

Encourage your baby to feed him or herself. Help your baby handle a spoon. Sit so she can hold the spoon, or your hand, and can learn the movements of feeding.

Also let your baby try drinking small amounts of water, formula, or fruit juice from a cup. When he or she becomes skillful at drinking from a cup, increase the amount you offer.

Remember, your baby will be messy when learning to feed him or herself. Try not to become overly concerned about neatness at this time. Be prepared with a bib or apron to protect clothing. A plastic drop cloth under your baby’s chair will make clean up easier.

Remember, it will take a long time before your baby can eat without your help.
Home Prepared Baby Food

Making baby food at home can be nutritious, inexpensive, and easy. Steam vegetables or fruit until tender. Save the water used for steaming and place the fruit or vegetables in the food processor or blender and puree. With the water from the steaming process, you can make baby food thinner if it is too thick. Pour the pureed baby food into ice trays and place in the freezer. Once frozen, transfer the cubes to plastic baggies. Take the food out of the freezer the morning that you wish to use it. Let baby food thaw in the refrigerator or heat it gently on the stove. Make sure baby food is cool before feeding it to your baby.

Don’t feed your baby homemade carrots, spinach, beets, turnips, or collard greens before 6 months old.

“Making baby food at home can be nutritious, inexpensive, and easy”

Finger Foods

Does your baby hold most foods while eating and drink from a cup? If so you can begin to give your baby finger foods.

Here are a few examples of some finger foods to start with.
• Cooked vegetables cut into strips.
• Peeled, soft fruit wedges.
• Bits of soft toast.
• Pieces of soft, mild cheese.
• Small, tender pieces of meat.

Your baby is learning to use his or her muscles and learning to coordinate hands & eyes. Finger foods gives a great opportunity to practice.

Remember, don’t give your baby nuts, seeds, or raw vegetables unless they are mashed or shredded. Avoid all small hard foods (such as popcorn).
Baby Food Safety

Don’t store uneaten portions of food in the fridge….THROW THEM OUT. Saliva from your baby’s mouth can cause bacteria to grow in unused portions of food.

Never microwave food for your baby. Even if stirred thoroughly, some parts may remain hot and could burn your child. Most jarred baby food doesn’t need to be heated anyway, and you can always heat on the stovetop if necessary.

• Don’t add salt, sugar, or seasonings to baby’s food.
• Don’t feed your baby honey during her first year.
• Don’t use “leftovers” to make baby food.
• Don’t feed your baby small foods that may cause choking such as, nuts or corn.
• Remember a little patience goes a long way.

Have Questions?
Call our nutrition consultation WARM-LINE
530-889-7350

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