

Feeding Your Baby from 6-8 Months

Offering iron-rich foods at about 6 months is important for your baby's development, but breastfeeding is still your baby's **most important** source of nutrition.



Tips for Introducing Solid Foods

- Baby should be sitting up straight while eating, not reclined or lying down.
- Look for signs that baby is hungry and wants to eat. Parents decide what and where baby will eat, baby decides when and how much to eat.
- Don't force baby to eat. If a food is refused, try the same food again the next day. Continue to offer these foods.
- Continue to feed baby as long as they appear happy and want to eat. The meal is finished when baby no longer seems interested in food or closes his mouth, rather than when the bowl is empty.
- Babies don't need added butter, sauce, salt or sweetener (sugar, honey, syrup etc.).
- Don't be alarmed if baby gags. Gagging is a natural reflex that helps babies avoid choking.
- Don't let baby play during mealtime; put away books, screens, toys.

First Foods

Iron-rich foods can safely be given as first foods at around 6 months. Caregivers can offer cooked meat, chicken, fish, eggs, beans, lentils, tofu, or iron-fortified infant cereal **two or more times each day**. Provide a variety of soft textures such as finely minced, puréed, mashed and finger foods to promote self-feeding.

Food Allergies

An allergy is an abnormal reaction of the immune system to a food. Food allergies are more common if a baby's sibling or parents have allergies, asthma or eczema. Signs of food allergies may include vomiting, diarrhea, skin rash, hives and breathing problems. Common food allergens can be introduced starting at 6 months. It is not recommended to wait to introduce food allergens.


Introduce only **one** of the food allergens (listed below) per day and wait **two days before introducing another food allergen**:

- Food allergens: whole eggs, milk, peanuts, fish and shellfish, sesame, soy, tree nut butters (e.g., almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, walnuts), wheat products, including wheat-based infant cereals. Once introduced and well tolerated, offer these foods a few times per week.
- Allergy symptoms usually appear within minutes, but can appear up to two hours after eating. If you think your baby has an allergy, contact your doctor. When introducing foods not found in the list above, you do not need to wait before introducing another new food.



Sample Menu

This sample menu is a guide only. Every baby is different and may eat more or less than the amounts given. **Follow your baby's cues to know how much to feed.**

Age	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
T = Tablespoon (15 ml) t = teaspoon (5 ml)				
To give your baby practice drinking from a cup, offer them an open cup of water or expressed breast milk (EBM) with meals.				
About 6 months Offer 1-2 meals per day	Begin with small amounts (1-3 t.) of meat, meat alternatives or iron fortified infant cereal - progress to twice daily. Sips of water or EBM in an open cup.		Offer two or more servings of iron rich foods per day before introducing vegetables, fruits, milk products and grains. Sips of water or EBM in an open cup.	Breastfeeding on cue at any time. A daily vitamin D supplement (400 IU) is recommended for all breastfed babies until 24 months of age.
7-8 months Offer 2-3 meals per day and 1-2 snacks	1-4 T. prepared iron-fortified infant cereal. 1-4 T. puréed or mashed fruit, or soft ripe fruit (e.g., apple, bananas, peaches). Sips of water or EBM.	1-4 T. meat alternative (scrambled eggs, mashed legumes or soft tofu). 1-4T. puréed or mashed vegetables (e.g., squash, peas, sweet potato). 1-4 T. Plain full fat yogurt or grated cheese. Sips of water or EBM.	1-4 T. puréed or finely minced meat or fish or infant cereal. 1-4T. soft cooked vegetables (e.g., broccoli, green beans, asparagus, zucchini, carrot). 1-4 T. soft ripe or cooked fruit (e.g. avocado, melon, pears, berries) Sips of water or EBM.	Breastfeeding on cue at any time. Whole grain toast cut into pieces or strips OR 1-4 T. Fruit (e.g., mashed avocado, stewed prunes or apple sauce) OR 1-4 T. Plain full fat yogurt with puréed fruit.

References:

Health Canada (2012) *Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants: Recommendations from Birth to Six Months*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canada-food-guide/resources/infant-feeding/nutrition-healthy-term-infants-recommendations-birth-six-months.html>

Health Canada (2014) *Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants: Recommendations from Six to 24 Months*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canada-food-guide/resources/infant-feeding/nutrition-healthy-term-infants-recommendations-birth-six-months.html>

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