

Feeding Baby Solid Foods

From 6 to 12 months of age



Government
of Alberta ■

Contents

Introducing Solid Food	1
Getting ready for meal times	2
Learning healthy habits	3
A healthy feeding relationship	3
Getting baby started	4
Iron-rich foods	5
Making healthy food choices for baby	6
Textured foods for baby	7
Trying new textures	8
Finger foods	8

Mealtime for Baby	9
Types of milk for baby	9
How many meals a day does baby need?	10
What does a meal look like?	10
Do babies need fat?	11
Drinks for baby	11
Foods to avoid	12
Caution	13
Baby's teeth	13

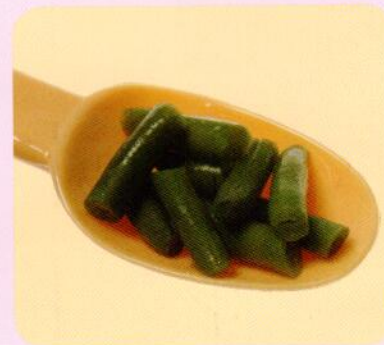
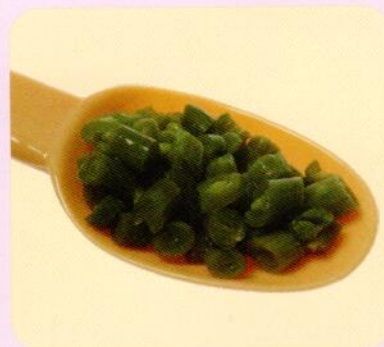
Preparing Food for Baby	14
Homemade baby food	14
Recipes	15
Store-bought baby food	16
Label reading	17
Eating out with baby	18

Food Safety Tips	19
Be clean	19
Separate foods	19
Cook and reheat	19
Chill	19
Questions and answers on allergies	20

Contacts/Acknowledgements	21
----------------------------------	-----------



Soft, cooked vegetables



Introducing Solid Food

At 6 months

Most babies start paying attention to what others are eating at around 6 months of age. This is an exciting time for both baby and you. If baby is 6 months old and reaching for your food, then baby is telling you that baby is ready to eat solid foods. Let baby guide you.

Some people think giving solid food to babies under 6 months of age helps a baby sleep through the night. This is not true. Giving solid foods to babies before 6 months can lead to over-feeding and low breastmilk intake.

Do not wait too long after a baby is 6 months old to introduce solid foods. Babies who are not introduced to solid foods until later in the first year may have a difficult time learning to eat different textures and flavours of foods. Babies do not need to have teeth to eat solid foods.

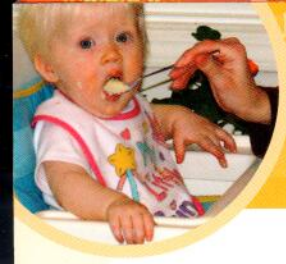
Introduce only one new food at a time to baby. Wait at least two days before adding the next new food so any allergy signs are easily noticed. For more information see Questions and answers on allergies.

As you introduce new foods, continue to offer foods that baby has already tried. Both you and baby should be relaxed and happy at mealtimes. Allow baby plenty of time for feeding.

Babies have small stomachs and need small, frequent meals and snacks. Begin by offering 1 to 2 teaspoons (5 to 10 ml) of food and gradually give more as baby accepts it.



*This tastes good
Grandpa!*



Getting ready for meal times

Face baby to feed

Put baby in a high chair, sitting straight up, facing forward. Use the safety belt to secure baby safely in the high chair. Sit so you are facing each other.

Let baby take the lead role

Allow baby to take the lead when eating. Wait for baby's mouth to open when you offer food.

Baby sets the pace

Let baby set the pace for eating. Feed as slowly or as quickly as baby wants. Stop feeding when baby show signs of fullness. Never force baby to eat.

Baby plays with food

Babies like to touch and feel new foods to become more familiar with them. Let baby make a mess while learning to eat with fingers.

Go slowly with new foods

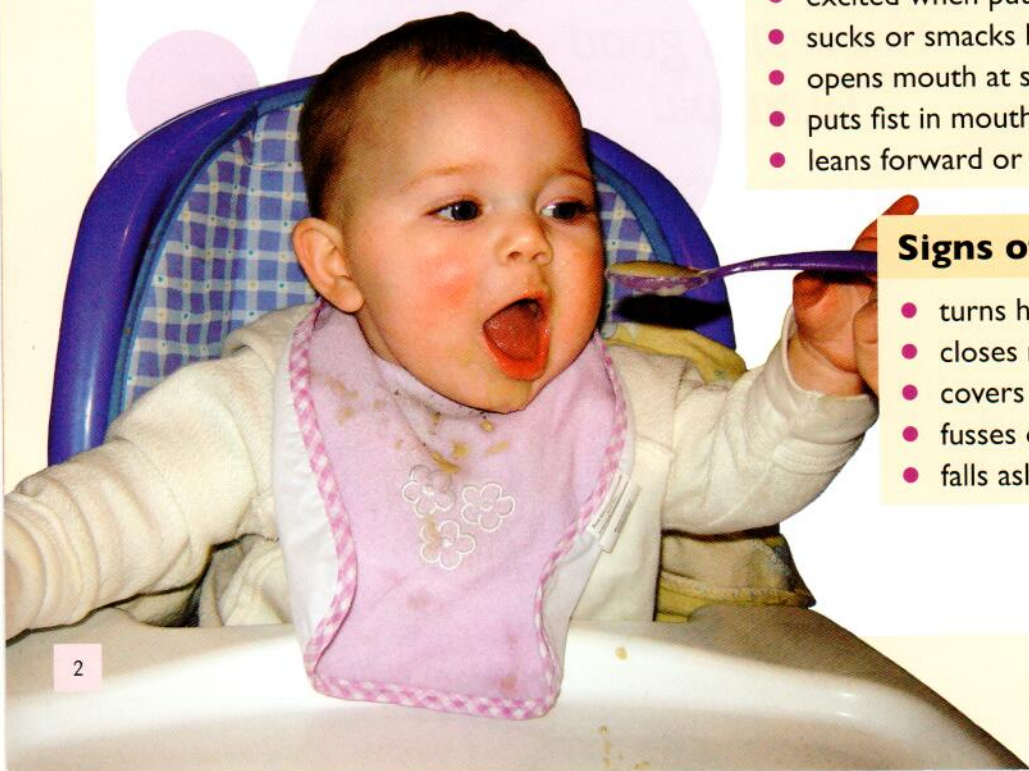
Do not worry if baby rejects, or appears not to like a food the first time. Try the food again a few days later. Some babies are very cautious eaters and need time to trust that a new food is okay to eat. Continue to offer baby new foods as well as the foods that you know baby already likes to eat.

Signs of hunger

- excited when put in the high chair
- sucks or smacks lips
- opens mouth at sight of food
- puts fist in mouth or cries
- leans forward or reaches for food

Signs of fullness

- turns head away at sight of spoon
- closes mouth at sight of spoon
- covers mouth with hands
- fusses or cries
- falls asleep



Learning healthy habits

Babies learn by watching people around them. Eating patterns and habits that babies learn early have a lasting effect on how a baby will grow and develop.

When a family eats together, baby learns that meal times are a time for the family to come together and share. Babies are quick to learn about food likes and dislikes of family members. It's important to be positive about foods and make healthy choices. Baby wants to be just like you. Be a healthy role model.



A healthy feeding relationship

- Baby needs time to develop skills and explore the eating experience.
- Learn to trust and respect your baby's signs of hunger and fullness. Baby knows how much to eat.
- A baby's growth is the best indicator that baby is eating enough food.
- Baby may have to try a food at several different meals before baby decides it's good to eat.
- Keep eye contact with baby when baby is eating and become familiar with what baby is telling you.
- When you learn to understand and respond to baby's signs for hunger and fullness you will help baby to understand baby's own feelings.

Every baby will like different foods and eat different amounts of food.





Bowel movements

When any change is made to baby's diet, bowel movements may change in firmness and number. These changes include:

- changing from breast milk to infant formula or cow's milk
- a supplemental feeding
- changing brands of infant formula
- starting pureed or table foods

Usually this change does not last long, and a new bowel movement pattern soon develops.

Healthy habits start early...



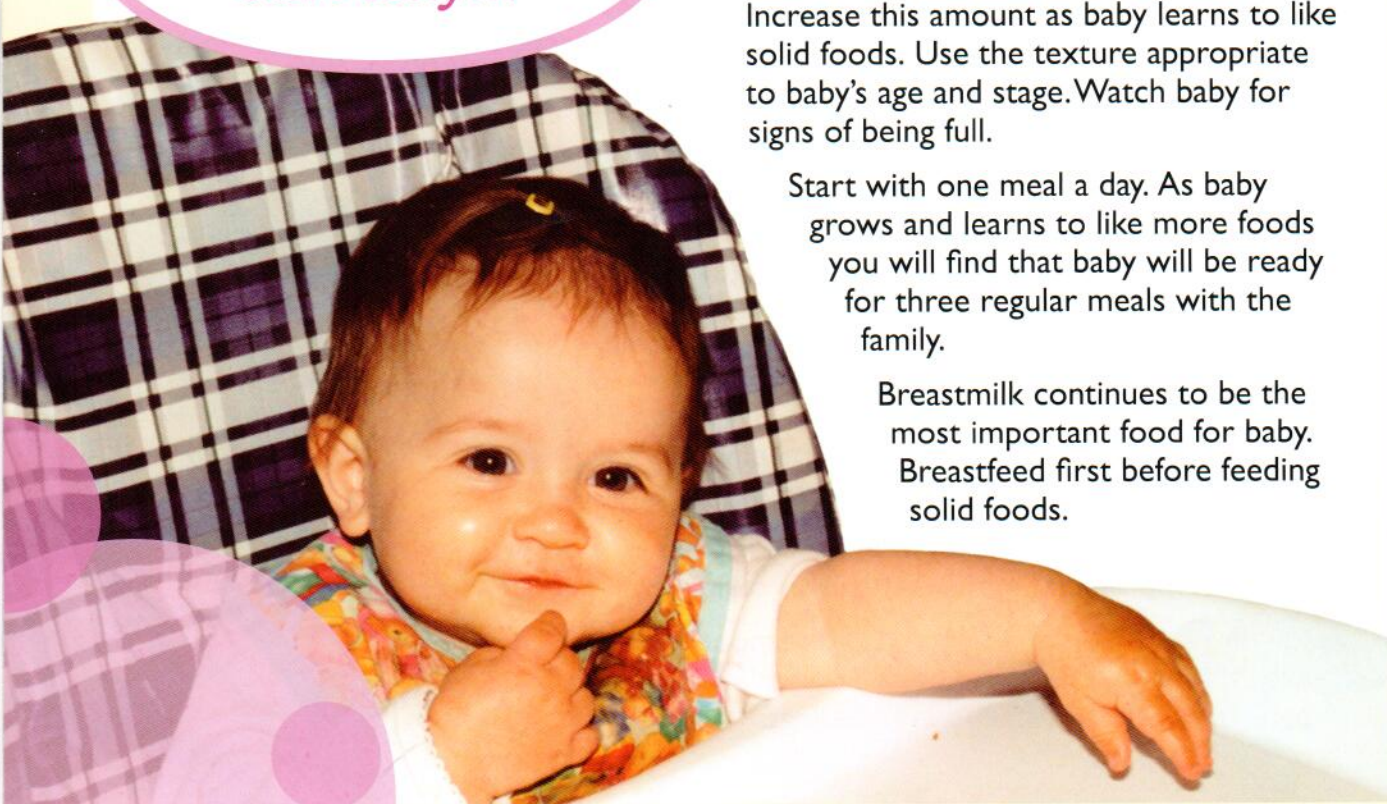
Getting baby started

Baby's appetite will vary from day-to-day. Some days a baby will eat a lot, other days not so much. Baby's appetite for solids will increase as baby grows older. This is normal. Once baby is eating a variety of foods, baby will typically eat anywhere from 1 to 5 tablespoons (15 to 75 ml) of each food choice offered at a meal.

Offer small amounts of food to start with. Increase this amount as baby learns to like solid foods. Use the texture appropriate to baby's age and stage. Watch baby for signs of being full.

Start with one meal a day. As baby grows and learns to like more foods you will find that baby will be ready for three regular meals with the family.

Breastmilk continues to be the most important food for baby. Breastfeed first before feeding solid foods.





Iron-rich foods

Babies need iron for growth and development. Babies are born with iron stored in their bodies but these iron stores are used up by six months of age. This is why it is important to give baby foods that contain iron when you first start feeding solid foods.

A combination of iron-fortified infant cereals, meats, and alternatives will meet baby's iron needs. Alternatives include cooked egg yolk, beans (kidney beans, lima beans) and lentils.

Babies need foods that are a good source of vitamin C, such as sweet potatoes, green beans, squash, broccoli and mango. Vitamin C helps our bodies use the iron from the foods that we eat.

Stages of food texture in iron-fortified infant cereal

Starting out: Smooth



Later on: Lumpy



Other sources of iron

Meat source of iron Minced chicken



Alternative source of iron Soft, cooked kidney beans



Vitamin C sources

Mango

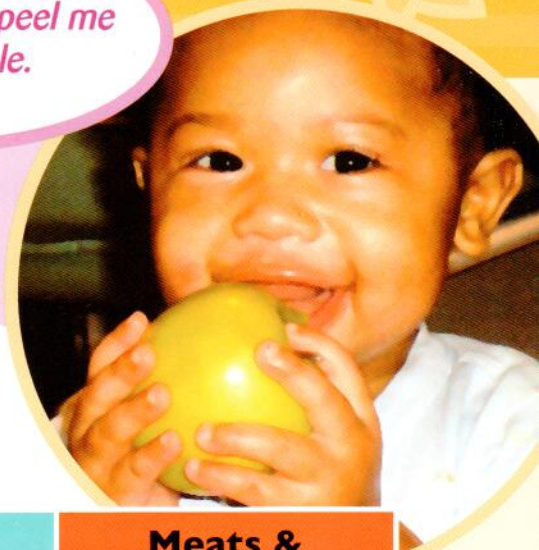


Green beans









Please cut and peel me some apple.

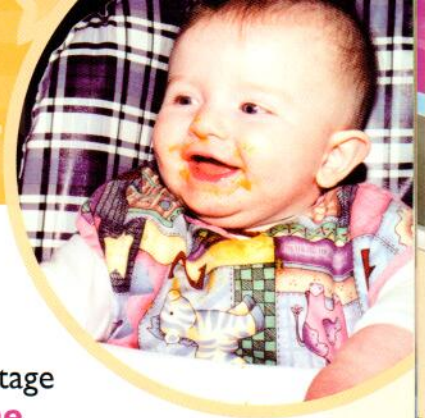


Making healthy food choices for baby

Once a variety of foods and solids become part of baby's daily routine, try to include 3 to 4 food groups at each meal.

Baby will need foods from all the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide as shown below.

Vegetables & Fruit	Grain Products	Milk & Alternatives	Meats & Alternatives
			
<p>Examples of typical first vegetables & fruits include carrots, squash, yams, sweet potatoes, peas, bananas, peaches, mango, applesauce and avocado.</p> <p>Progress from pureed to mashed foods, and then to cooked vegetable pieces and soft cut-up fruit.</p> <p>Juice is optional. Use 100% pasteurized, unsweetened juice, served in a cup, not in a bottle. Limit juice to 125 ml / 1/2 cup a day.</p>	<p>Use iron-fortified infant cereals* such as rice, barley, oats and wheat. Always feed infant cereal from a spoon, not in a bottle.</p> <p>Introduce all single-grain cereals before feeding baby a mixed grain cereal.</p> <p>Progress to other grain products such as cut up pasta, rice, couscous, unsweetened breakfast cereals, toast and plain unsalted crackers.</p> <p><small>* iron-fortified infant cereals are recommended until 18-24 months of age.</small></p>	<p>Breast milk continues to be the main food for baby throughout the first year. Breastfeeding is encouraged for 2 years and beyond.</p> <p>If not breastfeeding, infant formulas with iron are the best alternative to breast milk and should be used for at least the first 9 to 12 months.</p> <p>Milk products such as plain yogurt (>2.5 MF) and cheese can be given after baby has been introduced to a variety of iron-rich foods, cereals, fruits and vegetables.</p> <p>Whole (homogenized / 3.25% MF) milk can be introduced after 9 months.</p>	<p>Meat and alternatives provide dietary iron. Examples are chicken, wild game, turkey, beef, pork, lamb, beans and other legumes, deboned fish, cooked egg yolk and tofu.</p> <p>Some fish may contain high levels of mercury. This is of particular concern to young children and pregnant or breastfeeding women**.</p> <p>Choose char, herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines, trout or "light" tuna. Limit shark, fresh or frozen tuna, swordfish and marlin.</p> <p><small>** Health Canada provides advice for limiting exposure to mercury from certain types of fish. Refer to www.healthcanada.gc.ca for the latest information.</small></p>



Textured foods for baby

When feeding baby, match the texture of food to baby's developmental stage and feeding cues. Use the ages listed below only as a **general guideline** because every baby is different and a baby may progress through these stages faster or slower than what is listed.

Age (months)	Baby's developmental stage	Appropriate food texture
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> holds head up sits with little help opens mouth when food is offered reaches out and is curious about food is able to take food from a spoon is able to move food to back of mouth with tongue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strained pureed smooth mashed  <p>Smooth green beans</p>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can turn head away to refuse foods begins a chewing motion 	 <p>Minced peaches</p>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> likes to finger feed can sit on own is starting to crawl can close mouth on cup rim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> grated minced lumpy diced cut up
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sips from a cup with help shows interest in feeding themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> soft foods finely chopped
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feeds self with fingers tries to feed self with spoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> foods that soften or dissolve in the mouth. Examples are dry, toasted-oat cereal and unsalted, whole wheat crackers.
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accepts 4 to 5 sips from cup bites and chews food 	
12		



Trying new textures

It is important for baby to try different textures. This helps baby learn to chew, swallow and enjoy the same food the family is eating.

Baby needs pureed food only for a short time. Between 6 and 7 months, baby can progress from purees to well-mashed and soft-cooked finger foods.

At 7 to 9 months of age, babies like to start to feed themselves. Encourage self-feeding and finger foods as soon as baby shows interest. Continue to offer food on a spoon as baby learns to eat.

If you wait too long to feed lumpy, solid foods it may be harder for baby to accept new textures of foods. It may also increase the risk of feeding difficulties later on.

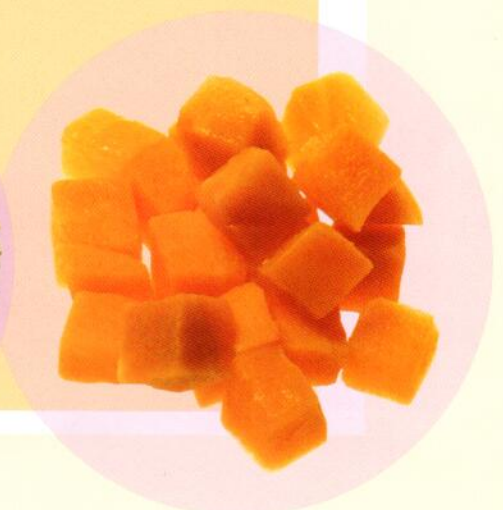
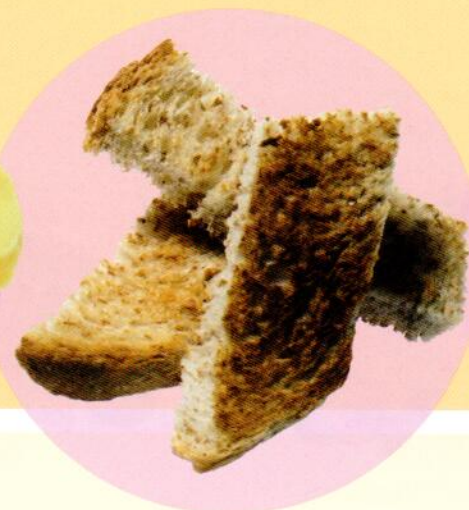
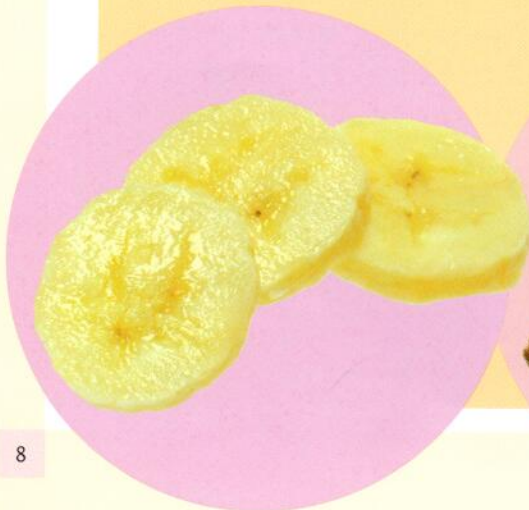
At 12 months of age, baby should be eating with the family and enjoying the same variety of healthy foods that the family is eating.

Babies may gag or spit out food when learning to eat. This is normal, simply try offering the food at another meal. Don't be discouraged.

Finger foods

Almost any healthy food can be made into a good finger food, just make sure to cut the food into bite-sized pieces. Here are some ideas:

- soft ripe peeled fruit (banana, pear, peaches, plums, mango, cantaloupe, kiwi)
- soft cooked vegetables (carrots, sweet potato, turnip, zucchini, broccoli)
- dry toast strips
- shredded or cubed cheese
- tender cooked meat cut up
- cooked beans and lentils
- tofu
- cooked pasta or cut up casserole



Mealtime for Baby

Types of milk for baby

- The only food baby needs for the first six months of life is breastmilk.
- Babies still need breastmilk when they start eating solid foods.
- Babies who are not breastfed will need to have an iron-fortified infant formula for the first 9 to 12 months.
- At 9 to 12 months, babies can be offered pasteurized, whole fat (homogenized / 3.25% MF) milk once they are eating a variety of **iron-rich foods** at most meal times. A breastfed baby does not need to add extra milk.
- If baby is not eating a variety of foods that contain iron then do not start feeding baby whole fat (homogenized / 3.25% MF) milk. Keep breastfeeding or using iron-fortified formula and continue offering iron-rich foods to baby.
- If baby is under 2 years and has been weaned to whole fat (homogenized / 3.25% MF) milk, baby will need to continue with this milk until baby is 2 years old.
- **Lower-fat milks such as 2%, 1%, and skim do not have enough fat and energy for a baby. These milks are not recommended for babies under 2 years of age.**
- Soy or rice drinks should not replace breastmilk, formula, or whole fat (homogenized / 3.25% MF) milk in the first 2 years. This is because they do not contain enough protein, healthy fat, or calories to help baby grow and develop.

Health Canada recommends that all babies continue to be breastfed until they are 2 years of age and beyond.

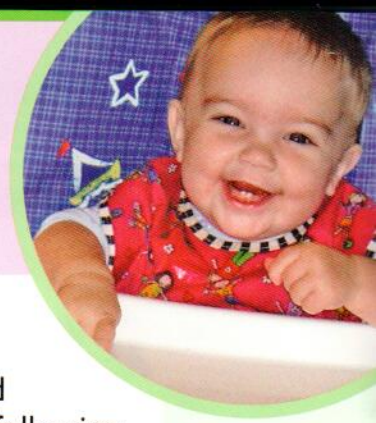
Iron-rich solid foods include iron-fortified infant cereals and meats and alternatives.





Remember

Parents are responsible for what foods are offered. Baby is responsible for how much baby eats.



How many meals a day does baby need?

No two babies eat alike ... some babies are very interested in food and may want more. Other babies are less interested and take a bite or two. The following chart is just a guideline to help you plan meal times for baby.

At 6 to 8 months	Offer 1 to 3 meals per day
At 9 to 11 months	Offer 2 to 3 meals and 1 to 2 snacks per day between meals
At 12 months	Offer 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks per day between meals

What does a day of meals for a 9 month old look like?

In addition to breastmilk:

Morning Meal	 Iron-fortified infant cereal 1/2 cup prepared	 Cut up peaches 2 to 3 tbsp	 1 Egg yolk (hard boiled)
Mid-day Meal	 Bread 1/2 slice	 Vegetables 2 to 3 tbsp	 1/4 Small banana soft, cut up
Snack	 1 ounce Cheese cubes	 1/4 cup dry cereal	 Small cup of water
Evening Meal	 Pasta 1/4 cup	 Soft cooked carrots 2 to 3 tbsp	 Chicken 1 to 2 tbsp



Do babies need fat?

- Babies need a source of good fats for growth and development. Good fats include: whole fat milk products including yogurt, cheese and milk; and meat, fish*, poultry and avocado.
- When feeding baby store-bought foods, look at the Nutrition Facts panel and choose foods that have a small amount or no saturated fat. Choose foods that contain no trans fats. (hydrogenated fat or vegetable oil shortening). See label reading.
- Reduced fat foods and diet foods are **not** appropriate for baby.

* Health Canada provides advice for limiting exposure to mercury from certain types of fish. Refer to www.healthcanada.gc.ca for the latest information.

Drinks for baby

Follow these guidelines when baby is 6 to 12 months old

Water

After six months, and once your baby is drinking out of a cup, you can offer water to quench baby's thirst. If you think baby is thirsty, try offering a small amount of water (2 to 3 oz/ 60 to 90 ml). Babies should get used to the taste of water but it should not replace the intake of milk. **A healthy habit for baby is to learn to drink milk with meals and drink water to quench thirst.**

Juice

Juice is not necessary for baby. After 6 months, if you decide to give juice, choose 100% unsweetened, pasteurized fruit juice and offer it in an open cup as part of a meal or snack. Diluting juice is not necessary. Babies should have no more than 2 to 4 oz (120 ml / 1/2 cup) of juice a day. Juice should not be given in a bottle as this can lead to tooth decay (rotten teeth). Choose to offer baby fruits and vegetables instead.

Other

Drinks such as coffee, tea, herbal tea, pop, fruit drinks, lemonades, punches or sports drinks should never be given to babies.

For the first 6 months, healthy, full-term babies get all the fluid they need from breastmilk and formula. A baby does not need any other fluids.





Foods to avoid

The following foods **are not healthy choices** for a baby:

⊘ french fries	⊘ candy, chocolate or marshmallows
⊘ pop and freezie/slushie type drinks	⊘ ice cream, sweet desserts, sweetened gelatin
⊘ pickles and olives	⊘ processed meats like hot dogs/weiners, bologna, salami
⊘ snack foods such as chips, cheese/popcorn puffs	⊘ sugar coated cereals
⊘ dry or canned soups, canned pasta	⊘ gravy, butter, margarine, salad dressing

Babies do not need added sodium (salt) and sugar.

- Extra salt is hard on baby's kidneys. Sugary foods, candy and drinks do not give baby needed vitamins or minerals, can cause tooth decay and may put baby at risk for weight problems later in life.
- Due to the risk of botulism (food poisoning) a baby should not be given honey until they are over 12 months of age.

Yummy!
Watermelon is a great snack for me!



Grapes need to be cut into quarters



Caution

Be cautious with certain textures. Your baby's chewing and swallowing skills will keep developing into their preschool years. Although it's normal for a baby to gag and spit out food while learning to eat, choking is dangerous. Avoid or modify foods that are choking hazards until the child is 3 to 4 years of age. Learn what to do if baby is choking. Keep all emergency numbers posted by the phone.

Safety tips

Foods that may cause problems...	What to do to make them safe
Foods that are stringy or chewy like meat, long pasta, or cheesy toppings	Cut the food up into small pieces
Food that sticks to the roof of the mouth like cream cheese and cheese spread	Spread it thinly for your baby
Round or smooth foods like grapes or cherries	Cut them into four parts and take out the pits or seeds
Foods like wieners or hot dogs	Cut them lengthwise and then cut again into bite-sized pieces
Hard foods like raw vegetables or fruit	Cook to soften them or grate them into tiny pieces
Hard candies, nuts, seeds, popcorn, fish with bones, or snacks with toothpicks or skewers, raisins and gum	Do not give these foods to babies before they are 4 years old

Baby's teeth

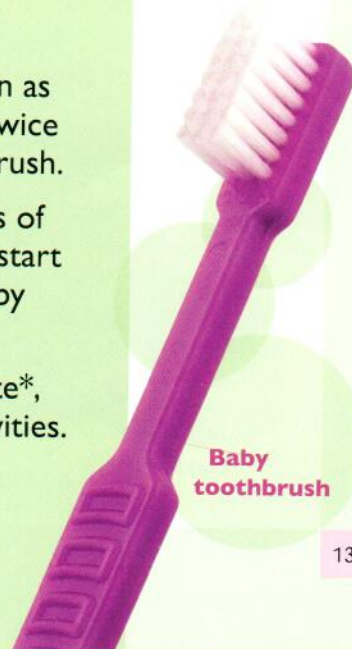
Before teeth appear, wipe baby's gums with a soft cloth. As soon as baby's first tooth appears you can begin to brush baby's teeth twice a day and especially before bed. Use a small soft bristle tooth brush.

Lift baby's upper lip once a month to check teeth for early signs of tooth decay. White lines along baby's gum line could mean the start of tooth decay. Brown areas along baby's gum line can mean baby may already have tooth decay.

At 12 months you can use a small amount of fluoride toothpaste*, the size of a grain of rice. Fluoride toothpaste helps prevent cavities.

Have baby's teeth checked by a dental professional when baby is one year old.

* Caregivers should ask a dental health professional for specific fluoride recommendations.



Baby toothbrush

Preparing Food for Baby



Food can be prepared easily by mashing with a fork or potato masher or by using a food grinder, processor or blender.

Homemade baby food

Making your own baby food is a simple, nutritious and inexpensive way to feed baby.

It allows you to offer textures that are just right for baby's needs and abilities.

There is no need to prepare large amounts of pureed baby food. Baby will progress quickly to more textured foods.

Baby will enjoy eating the same types of foods as the rest of the family. Baby does not need added sugar or sodium (salt) and neither do we. Remove baby's food portion if you are going to add sugar or sodium (salt) to the family meal.

Baby food can be made at each meal or ahead of time and stored in the fridge or freezer. See Food Safety Tips.

Do not feed homemade baby food directly from the container. Put the amount of food baby will eat at one meal into a dish and feed from the dish. Throw out any leftover food in baby's dish after baby is finished eating.



Hand grinder



Recipes

Vegetable or Fruit Puree

Ingredients

Fresh or frozen fruit or vegetables

Method

1. Wash, peel and cut up fresh or frozen vegetables or fruit.
2. Using the stove: Place the vegetable or fruit pieces into a steamer in a small amount of boiling water and simmer until tender. Using the microwave: Place vegetable or fruit in a microwave safe bowl with a small amount of tap water and heat at a high setting until the vegetables are tender, about 3 to 5 minutes.
3. Drain the vegetables or fruit, saving the cooking liquid.
4. Puree the vegetable or fruit with a small amount of the cooking liquid.
5. Serve baby his/her portion and freeze the remaining puree. See Food Safety Tips, Chill.

Fruit and Yogurt Smoothie

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup (125 ml) frozen fruit
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) plain yogurt
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) whole fat (homogenized / 3.25% MF) milk*

Method

1. Place all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth.
2. Pour 1/4 cup (60 ml) to 1/2 cup (125 ml) into a cup for baby and place the remainder into a glass for mom or dad. Sit and enjoy.

Alternative suggestion

Frozen Fruit and Yogurt Pops

1. Place 1/4 cup (60 ml) of the fruit and yogurt puree into frozen treat molds and freeze until firm.
2. Serve as a snack.

*Wait until 9 months to use.

Meat or Legume Puree

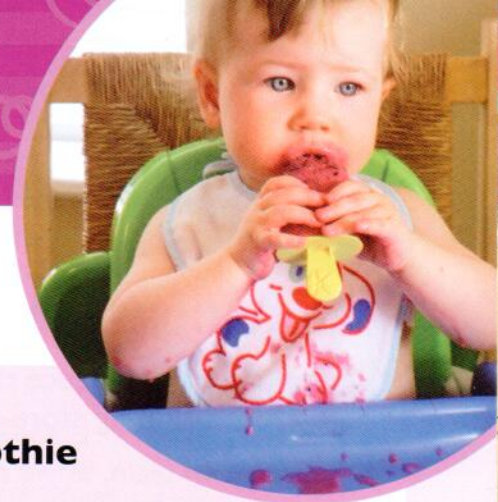
Ingredients

- Remove all fat and skin from meat before cooking
- 1 cup (250 ml) of cooked and chopped beef, wild game, chicken, turkey, fish (no bones), legumes or lentils.
- 2 to 4 tbsp (30 to 60 ml) liquid. This can be breastmilk, water, or cooking liquid from vegetables/fruit.

Method

1. Place chopped meat or drained legumes/ lentils into a blender.
2. Add 2 tbsp (30 ml) of liquid and start to puree. Slowly add another 1 to 2 tbsp. (15 to 30 ml) liquid until you have a smooth puree.
3. Serve baby his/her portion and freeze the remaining puree. See Food Safety Tips, Chill.
4. As baby grows older, increase the texture.

For more recipe ideas check with your local community health centre.





Yogurt

Store-bought baby food

Many parents introduce their babies to solid foods without using store-bought baby foods. If using store-bought baby food, here are some tips:

- Start with plain, single grain, iron-fortified infant cereals or a meat puree.
- Increase texture as baby gets older.
- Read the ingredients list. The main ingredient is listed first, and the least ingredient is listed last. Choose foods without added salt, sugar and little or no saturated fat and no trans fats (hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated).
- Make sure the safety seal is not broken. Do not use the food in the jar if you do not hear the lid pop, or if the safety seal button is up.
- Throw away any baby food that is past the “best before” date.
- Do not feed baby directly from the jar. Put the amount of food baby will eat at one meal into a dish, and feed from the dish. Throw out any leftover food from the baby’s dish after baby is finished eating.
- Casseroles and combination dinners may contain less meat than you expect. Choose a meat in broth. Examples are beef or chicken in broth.

Baby does not need packaged baby foods, like custards, baby juice, desserts and teething biscuits.



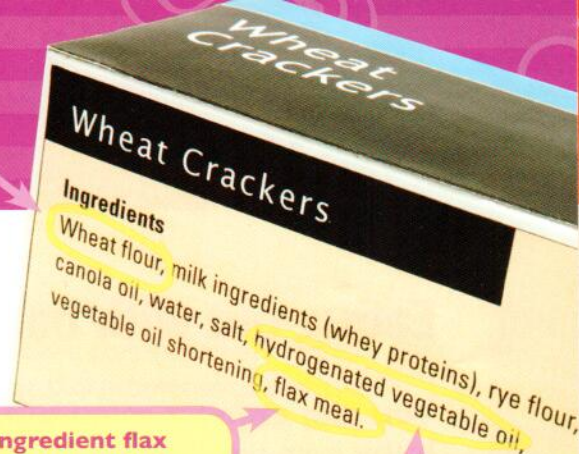
Unsweetened applesauce



Pureed carrots, peas and fruit



This package contains more wheat flour than all the other ingredients.



Label reading

Ingredients Label:

Use the Ingredient label to see if

- there are ingredients you want to avoid, for example salt or sugar
- there are ingredients baby is allergic to

If you are not sure you can call the 1-800 number listed on most packages.

Nutrition Facts Label: Dietary Guidelines used for label information do not apply to children under 2 years of age. Use nutrition fact labels to understand what is in the package and to make healthy food choices.

The ingredient flax meal is the smallest amount of ingredient in this package.

This ingredients label lists trans fats such as hydrogenated vegetable oil, and vegetable oil shortening. Do not feed your baby foods that contain trans fats.

Serving Size — is a suggested serving for adults. A serving for a baby may only be one or two crackers at a meal or snack.

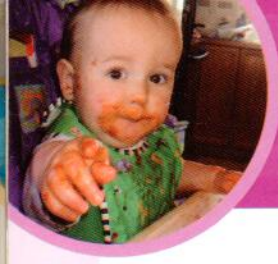
% Daily Value — the percentage of the total recommended daily amount of each nutrient (fats, carbs, proteins, major vitamins, and minerals) for the serving size stated on the package, based on a 2,000 calorie per day diet. The % Daily Value numbers are not recommendations for a baby.

Total fat — for the serving size listed; includes saturated fat and trans fat. Choose foods that contain little or no saturated fat per single serving and no trans fat. In this example the suggested serving is 6 crackers. A suggested baby sized serving would be about 2 crackers. Most saturated fats and trans fats are unhealthy fats. **Babies do need healthy fats and cholesterol** in their diets for proper growth and development. Healthy fats to choose from are plant based oils such as canola, olive, sunflower and the fats found naturally in whole milk products such as full fat milk and cheeses. Check out the ingredients label.

Sodium (salt) and Sugar — Choose packaged foods with little or no amounts of sodium (salt) and sugar. Look at the ingredient list to see where sodium and sugar are listed. If sodium and sugar are listed as one of the first three ingredients, the product is not a healthy choice.

Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value
Serving Size — 6 crackers (38 g)	
Calories 125	8%
Total Fat 5 g	6%
Saturated Fat 3 g	
+ Trans Fat 1 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	23%
Sodium 560 mg	5%
Carbohydrate 15 g	14%
Fiber 4 g	
Sugar 6 g	
Protein 5 g	0%
Vitamin A	0%
Vitamin C	17%
Calcium	3%

Fibre — is important for everyone, including babies, to keep bowel movements regular. There are no guidelines for how much fibre a baby should have. Fibre is found naturally in fruit, vegetables, lentils and whole grains. Fibre supplements are not recommended for a baby.



Remember

You are a role model for healthy choices for baby. Make eating out a time for you and baby to enjoy healthy foods together.

Eating out with baby

You can enjoy a meal out with baby from time to time. Planning ahead will ensure baby has healthy foods to eat no matter where you go.

Before leaving the house, pack enough food for baby to cover the time you will be out. To be really prepared, pack a little extra in case you do not return home in time for baby's next meal. Use an insulated lunch bag containing a small freezer pack. This keeps food at a proper temperature and prevents it from spoiling.

Tips for eating out with baby

1. Bananas are the perfect pack-up-and-go fruit or try soft pieces of fruit you can mash with a fork.
2. Leftovers like cooked vegetables and/or meat can be cut into appropriate sized pieces, heated and placed in a thermos to maintain proper temperature.
3. Pack small, reusable containers with a serving of yogurt or unsweetened applesauce.
4. Take along dry, unsweetened cereal or unsalted, whole wheat crackers.
5. Handy items to take with you include a bowl and spoon to feed baby, a fork for mashing food and a reusable cup for a drink of water, especially if you plan on sharing your food.

Most foods in restaurants and fast food courts are not suitable for baby but with careful planning you can order from the menu. Ask the server questions about ingredients used to prepare the meal and then select items appropriate for baby. Most restaurants and fast food kiosks have a microwave and may be willing to reheat baby's food.

Good choices to order from a menu include simple dishes like:

- broiled meats
- baked potato, pasta, rice
- steamed vegetables with no added salt or fat

These foods are easily mashed, minced or diced depending on the texture of food baby is currently eating.

Baby does not need foods containing unhealthy fats, sugar and/or salt.

Avoid foods like:

- deep fried potatoes or fried vegetables (unhealthy fats)
- breaded or fried meats (unhealthy fats)
- cakes, cookies, pies and ice cream (high in sugar)



Food Safety Tips

Be clean

- Wash hands with warm, soapy water before preparing baby's food.
- Clean all surfaces and equipment with hot water and soap before and after preparing baby's food.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables under running water. Scrub fruits and vegetables that have a firm skin under running water.
- Wash your hands and baby's hands and face before eating.

Separate foods

- Separate raw meat, poultry, fish and eggs from foods that are ready to eat. This will help prevent the spread of bacteria.
- Use one cutting board and one set of utensils for raw meat, poultry, fish and eggs and another for ready-to-eat foods such as fruits, vegetables and breads. Wash cutting boards and utensils thoroughly after each use.
- Do not place cooked food on dishes that have held raw meat, poultry, fish or eggs.

Cook and reheat

- You can thaw food in the refrigerator, in a microwave or in a sealed container that is submersed in cold water. It is not safe to thaw food on the counter at room temperature.

- When cooking food for baby, make sure food is cooked to safe temperatures. Use a meat thermometer to test the temperature.

Ground meat	165°F / 74°C
Beef and pork	160°F / 71°C
Poultry	165°F / 74°C
Fish	145°F / 63°C
Leftovers and Casseroles	165°F / 74°C

- Homemade baby food can be reheated in the microwave or in a double boiler. Be careful when heating in the microwave, as there are hot and cold spots. Stir and rotate the food often for even reheating.
- Always test the temperature of food before feeding baby. It should be luke warm, not hot.

Chill

- Prepared foods, including infant formula, should not be left at room temperature for more than one hour.
- Homemade baby food or commercially prepared baby food that has been opened may be kept in the fridge for up to 2 days.
- When freezing homemade baby food put it into ice-cube trays or drop spoonfuls onto a cookie sheet, cover and place in freezer. Once the food is frozen, empty the cubes or spoonfuls into a plastic freezer bag and label the contents with the name and the date the food was prepared.



Homemade baby food ready for the freezer



Questions and answers on allergies

Q. What are the signs of a food allergy?

A. Possible signs of an allergy are:

- a rash or hives
- throwing up, diarrhea, or stomach pain
- clear, runny nose that lasts a long time
- watery or swollen eyes
- poor growth

Q. What should I do if my baby shows signs of a food allergy?

A. If you think baby has an allergy, do the following.

- Stop feeding the food you think caused the allergy. This is why it is so important to introduce only one new food at a time.
- Make an appointment with your baby's doctor.
- You may need to see a children's allergy specialist.

Q. What should I do if my baby shows severe or sudden allergy symptoms?

A. Babies who show severe or sudden allergy symptoms need immediate emergency care. If any of the following severe symptoms appear, take your baby to the nearest emergency department right away. Telephone 911 for an ambulance if the symptoms start immediately or quickly become worse. Signs include:

- difficulty breathing
- unable to swallow
- swelling of the tongue or in the mouth
- swelling inside the throat

If you have concerns about food allergies and specific foods to avoid you can contact **Health LINK Alberta**. See contact information on the next page.

Contacts

If you have questions about feeding baby solid foods, contact:

- baby's doctor
- registered nurse
- nurse practitioner
- registered dietitian
- community/public health nurse
- registered community nutritionist

Or call Health LINK Alberta at

- Edmonton **780-408-LINK**
- Calgary **403-943-LINK**
- Outside of the Edmonton and Calgary local calling areas call **1-866-408-LINK (5465)**

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the partners who researched, created, provided their expertise and reviewed the content of *Feeding Baby Solid Foods - From 6 to 12 months of age*:

- Provincial Infant/Preschool Subcommittee of the Alberta Public/Community Health Nutritionist's Committee.
- Registered dietitians, registered community nutritionists, public health nurses, pediatric occupational therapists, and dental hygienists for thoughtful insight and thorough review.

Alberta Health and Wellness would also like to acknowledge:

- Parents who provided photos of their infants mastering the skill of eating healthy solid foods.
- Dietitians of Canada. Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition (PEN). Knowledge Pathway Topic – Food Allergies. www.dieteticsatwork.com/pen. March 23, 2007.
- Calgary Health Region's "3 Cheers for the Early Years" initiative © Calgary Health Region 2006, for providing food texture graphic photos.
- Health Canada. Exclusive Breastfeeding Duration 2004 Health Canada Recommendation. www.healthcanada.ca/nutrition. March 23, 2007.
- Dental Program, Capital Health, Primary Care Division, Community Health Services for providing the information on baby's dental care.

