

# HEALTHY BEGINNINGS

## OFFERING YOUR BABY SOLID FOODS (SIX TO 12 MONTHS)

### OFFER SOLID FOODS WHEN YOUR BABY CAN

- Hold their head up
- Sit up and lean forward
- Let you know when they are full
- Pick up food and try to put it in their mouth

### TRUST YOUR BABY TO DECIDE

- How much to eat
- Which foods to eat from the foods you offer
- When to eat

### Your job is to decide

- What foods to offer
- Where to eat (upright in a highchair with straps)

### CONTINUE TO BREASTFEED

- Breastfeed for as long as you and baby want
- Breastfeed before, after or between meals
- Give a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU daily if your baby is receiving breastmilk
- If you are not breastfeeding or offering expressed breastmilk, offer commercial infant formula that is purchased in Canada

### YOUR BABY KNOWS HOW MUCH TO EAT

- Your baby's tummy is small. They can eat as little as one teaspoon or several tablespoons
- If you let your baby follow their hunger and fullness cues, they will eat the right amount

### PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675  
TTY 1-866-512-6228  
[york.ca/feedingkids](http://york.ca/feedingkids)

### Your baby is interested or hungry when they

- Lean forward and reach for food
- Open their mouth wide when food is offered

### Your baby is not interested or full when they

- Turn their head or face away
- Keep their mouth closed
- Lean back away from food

### OFFER IRON-RICH FOODS AS FIRST FOODS

- Iron-rich foods include:
  - Legumes (kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas)
  - Soy products (tofu, edamame)
  - Eggs (both egg yolk and white)
  - Beef, dark meat chicken, turkey, pork, fish
  - Iron-fortified infant cereal
- Offer iron-rich foods at least twice daily (more often if vegetarian)
- Vitamin C (vegetables, fruit) helps absorb iron

### NEW FOODS CAN BE INTRODUCED DAILY

- Once iron-rich foods are introduced, all other foods can be offered in any order
- The only food to avoid is honey (even cooked)
- No need to wait days between new foods (common food allergens are the exception)

### Common food allergens

- Wait two days between offering common food allergens.

- Common food allergens are:
  - Peanuts, tree nuts and sesame seeds (peanut or almond butter, tahini)
  - Mustard
  - Eggs
  - Milk and milk products (cheese, yogurt)
  - Fish and shellfish
  - Soy (tofu, edamame)
  - Wheat
- If you suspect an allergic reaction (rash, vomiting, diarrhea), talk to baby's doctor
- If you suspect a severe allergic reaction (difficulty breathing, swelling of the tongue or throat), call 9-1-1 immediately

## OFFER A VARIETY OF TEXTURES

- Let your baby guide you on texture options. Try:
  - Ground, minced or shredded
  - Cooked or soft, diced foods (cut into pieces ½ to 1 centimetre in size)
  - Lumpy, mashed or pureed
- They may enjoy both spoon and finger feeding
- They do not need teeth to chew foods
- Let your baby hold their own spoon

## Some foods are choking risks. Avoid:

- Hard, small and round foods (whole grapes, raw carrots, nuts, fruit with pits, hot dogs)
- Smooth and sticky foods (nut butter by spoon)
- Make these foods safer
  - Grate or cook raw vegetables
  - Cut grapes in quarters
  - Remove pits from fruit
  - Thinly spread nut butters or mix into food

## Gagging

- It is normal as they learn to eat new textures
- It helps your baby to stop from choking

## MEAL PLANNING

- **Less than nine months of age** - offer solid foods 3-4 times per day
- **Nine months of age and older** - offer solid foods 4-5 times per day
- You do not need special equipment to make food for your baby at home

- A meal could include a:
  - Vegetable or fruit (or both)
  - Meat or meat alternative (beans, tofu, egg)
  - Grain or milk product (cheese, yogurt)
- Offer foods that the rest of the family eats
- Limit or avoid added salt or sugar. Instead, flavour food with herbs and spices
- Rice rusks and food puffs do little to teach your baby how to eat pieces of food
- If vegan, consult with a registered dietitian at TeleHealth Ontario

## ENJOY FAMILY MEALTIMES TOGETHER

- Sit, talk and eat with your baby at mealtimes
- Put away toys and turn off electronic devices (cell phones, tablets, TV)

## OFFER AN OPEN CUP

- It will take time and practice to learn
- Tap water is safe to drink
- Wait until nine to 12 months before giving whole (3.25% M.F.) milk as the main milk source
- Avoid fruit juice or other beverages

## Sippy and spill-free cups

- Are not substitutions for an open cup
- Can be convenient when away from home

## CARE FOR YOUR BABY'S GUMS AND TEETH

- Clean their gums, inside of cheeks and roof of mouth with a clean, soft damp cloth every day
- As soon as they have teeth, brush them gently, at least twice a day, using a small, soft toothbrush and water
- Visit the dentist for their first dental visit by their first birthday. Routine check-ups are important

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For additional nutrition resources and videos, visit [york.ca/feedingkids](http://york.ca/feedingkids) or [unlockfood.ca](http://unlockfood.ca)

To speak to a registered dietitian at no cost, call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.

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