

# Feeding Your Infant: 6-12 Months

## Starting Solids: Cereal

At six months of age most babies will be ready for solid food. This is a great time to add breast milk or formula to infant rice cereal. Using a small spoon that fits the baby's mouth, start with one teaspoon and increase the amount with the baby's appetite. Start with the cereal very thin and put less breast milk or formula in each time as your baby learns to accept it.

## Milk is Still Important

During the first year the main source of nutrition should be breast milk or formula. The baby should continue to have five to six breast feedings or 24 to 40 ounces of formula in 24 hours. Feed your baby breast milk or formula first followed by solids. If breast milk or formula consumption drops below 24 ounces or your baby does not want to nurse, you may be feeding too much solid food.

## Starting Solids: Other Foods

Once your baby is comfortable with iron-fortified cereal, you can begin to offer pureed fruits and vegetables. Try only one new food at a time and wait 5-7 days to try another new food. Watch for signs of allergic reaction, such as diarrhea, rash, cough, and/or vomiting.

You can also introduce 100% fruit juice to your baby after they are six months old. It is best to offer juice only in a cup; serve 100% fruit or vegetable juice - not juice drinks. Do not give your baby more than 3 ounces (about ½ cup) of juice per day. Babies are not used to the sweetness of juice. You could add water to the juice to dilute it.

## More Foods at 8-12 Months

By eight to ten months, most babies can pick up small pieces of food and feed themselves. Make sure an adult is always present when feeding your baby. Babies can choke very easily. Give small bite size pieces of cooked vegetables, peeled soft fruit, ground chicken and meat. By ten to twelve months, a baby can use a small cup and small spoon to eat.



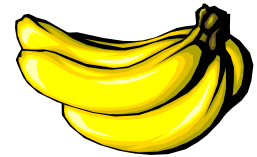
**After the first year,** your baby will need to eat a variety of foods everyday. Include whole cow's milk and milk products. Continue offering fruits, vegetables, meat and high protein foods such as beans, and grains such as cereal and bread. Plan snacks from all the food groups.

## Baby Food

Many parents choose to make their own baby food in a food processor, blender, strainer, masher or grinder. Two advantages to making your own baby food is that it is often less expensive and your baby will learn to eat the foods you make. If you buy baby food, remember dinners and desserts often have added sugar and are more expensive and may be less nutritious than individual foods.

### Tips for making your own baby food:

- Fresh or frozen foods can be used.
- Steaming and boiling are the best cooking methods for baby food.
- Microwave cooking is a good method, especially for vegetables.
- Salt, sugar, honey and/or corn syrup should **NOT** be added to baby food.
- Bananas, pears, strawberries, melons and other soft fruit can be mashed. Be sure to wash it first.
- Home cooked baby food may be immediately frozen or stored in shallow covered containers in the refrigerator for one or two days.
- Pour pureed food into ice cube trays and freeze. When food is frozen, remove the cubes and store in plastic bags or containers in the freezer for no longer than 2 months. (Be sure to write the date on the plastic bag or container.)



### Heating baby food:

Baby food may be served cold, at room temperature, or heated. Do not heat baby food in baby food jars. A dish, sauce pan, or microwave may be used to heat baby food. Be sure to stir food because of hot spots. Always test food by placing some on your wrist to make sure the food is not too hot.

**Cautions:** Children under 1 year of age should not be given the following foods because they may cause allergic reactions: honey, eggs, cow's milk or peanuts. Children under 3 years of age should not be given the following foods because they may cause choking: hot dogs, popcorn, raw carrots, nuts, hard candy, tough meats, large amounts of peanut butter, grapes, small marshmallows, cookies, and biscuits.

### Making your own baby food is simple when you follow these recipes:

#### Apples and Peaches

Makes 1 cup

- 1 apple
- ½ cup + 2 tablespoons water
- 1 cup peaches (frozen, fresh or canned in juice)

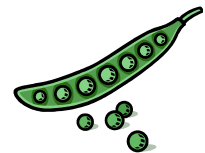
1. Peel, core, and dice apple (and peach if fresh).
2. Combine with ½ cup water in a saucepan, then bring to a boil over high heat; cook for 5 minutes.
3. Let cool for 10 minutes and then puree mixture until smooth.
4. While apple is cooling, combine peaches and 2 tablespoons water in a blender. Puree until smooth. Mix apple and peach mixture together and serve.

Nutrition Information: 70 calories, 0 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 0 mg sodium, 19 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, vitamin A 4%, vitamin C 100%

#### Green Peas

Makes ¾ cup

- 1 cup frozen peas
- ¾ cup water



1. Place peas and water in a saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, and cook for 6 minutes.
2. Let cool 10 minutes, then puree until smooth.

Nutrition Information: 35 calories, 0 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 55 mg sodium, 7 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 3 g sugar, 3 g protein, Vitamin A 20%, Vitamin C 15%

Sources: Feeding our Youngest Newsletter from Kansas State University