New Jersey WIC

Infant Feeding Guide

Tips

Feeding Human Milk and Formula

Human milk or formula is all your baby needs for the first 6 months of life. Your baby's digestive system is not ready for anything else until about 6 months of age.

Nursing is natural but may take time and practice. WIC breastfeeding peer counselors can help you and support your breastfeeding journey.

If bottle feeding, offer a small amount at a time.

When mixing infant formula, make only the amount your baby will need at a feeding. This avoids wasting formula.

- Hold baby in an almost upright position, supporting the head and neck.
- Do not prop the bottle. Hold the bottle in a flat, sideways position so the nipple is half full of milk.
- Touch the nipple to baby's cheek or top lip and wait for baby to open their mouth wide. Do not force the bottle.
- After baby latches, do not lean them back or tilt the bottle up.
- Watch baby for pauses and lower the bottle so the nipple is empty but remains in the mouth to give baby breaks.
- If baby stops sucking, turns away or falls asleep, end the feeding. Never force your baby to finish a bottle.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends **exclusively breastfeeding for the first six months** and that breastfeeding **continue for 2 years, or longer,** as desired by mother and baby.

Tips cont.

Feeding Solid Foods

Wait to offer solid foods until your baby:

Can sit up and hold up their own head.

Opens their mouth when they see food.

Can close their lips around a spoon.

- Try one new food at a time to watch for allergies. Wait 5 days before trying another new food.
- Food allergies may include wheezing, rash or diarrhea.
- Offer a variety of grain cereals (oatmeal, barley and rice) to your baby. There may be arsenic in rice cereal, offering different types is healthy for your baby.
- Once your baby has started solids, a small amount of water is a great choice to give in a cup at mealtimes. Your baby should not have juice or sugary drinks before they turn one.

! Babies under one year should **NOT** have honey, cow's milk or other non-dairy drinks, or foods that can cause choking like nuts or whole grapes.

Introducing Peanut Butter

Research suggests offering thinned peanut butter to a baby may help prevent a peanut allergy later in life. This can be especially important for families with food or egg related allergies, like eczema or other skin issues. Talk with your baby's doctor about introducing peanut butter if your family has one of these conditions.

Introduce your baby to peanut butter around 6 months of age, after they have tried other solid foods. Watch your baby for any reaction for two hours after they try it.

How to Thin Peanut Butter

Mix peanut butter with water, formula, human milk or food:

- Thin 2 tsp. of peanut butter with 2-3 tsp. hot water, formula or human milk. Allow to cool before serving.
- Blend 2 tsp. of peanut butter into 2-3 Tbsp. of foods like infant cereal or pureed fruits, vegetables, chicken or tofu.
- Spread a small, thin smear of peanut butter on a cracker or toast stick.

All babies are different. To help reduce your baby's risk of allergies talk to their healthcare provider about introducing peanuts, eggs or other allergenic foods before your baby turns 6 months old.