



# A nutrition Fact Sheet



## Feeding My Infant: Birth to 8 months

### Birth to 6 Months

#### Breastfeeding and Bottle Feeding

- Nurse when your baby wants to nurse or 'feed on demand.'
- Newborns nurse often, at least every two hours, but they are not on a strict schedule.
- Nurse your baby at least 10-20 minutes on each breast.
- 5 to 6 'wet' diapers and 3 to 4 'dirty' diapers is normal and means your baby is getting enough to eat.
- There's no need to force your baby to finish a bottle.
- Putting baby to bed with a bottle could cause choking.
- Never heat bottles in the microwave.

#### Introducing Cereals

- **Most babies do very well on just breast milk or formula for the first six months.** Ask your doctor if you feel your baby needs solid foods early.
- **Baby is ready for rice or single grain cereal when baby can do most, if not all, of the following:**
  - Control head and neck in a steady, upright position.
  - Sit up with support.
  - Seems hungry between regular feedings.
  - Shows interest in food when you eat.
  - Baby no longer pushes food out of his/her mouth.
  - Baby recognizes the spoon and opens his/her mouth as the spoon comes toward his/her mouth.
- **Putting cereal in a bottle is not recommended and will not help your baby sleep through the night.**

### 6 Months to 8 Months

#### Feed Your Baby

- Breast milk or formula
- Fortified baby cereal
- Dry bread/toast
- Crackers
- Pureed fruit and vegetables

#### Tips

- Add one new food each week. Allergies can be determined easily this way.
- Start with strained/pureed fruits and vegetables first. Add mashed or finely chopped fruits and cooked vegetables later on.
- Take out the amount of food for one feeding. Throw away what is not eaten from that amount.

## Babies were born to be breastfed.

- Breastfeeding is normal and healthy for infants and moms.
- For most babies, breast milk is easier to digest than formula.
- A mother can satisfy her baby's hunger right away with breastfeeding.
- Breastfeeding requires a mother to take some quiet relaxed time for herself and her baby, helping them bond.
- The more baby nurse, the more breast milk is body produced.
- Breastfeeding doesn't have to be 'all or nothing.' Breast and formula feeding can be combined.
- Formula is a healthy option if breastfeeding is not possible.

## How to add baby cereal

1. Buy iron fortified baby cereals.
2. Start with rice cereal - it causes the fewest allergy problems.
3. Use only single-ingredient baby cereals like rice, barley, and oatmeal.
4. Mix 1 tablespoon of cereal with 4 tablespoons of breast milk or formula. The cereal will be thin. Your baby is learning how to move solid food to the back of the mouth. When your baby can do this, make the cereal thicker.
5. Offer your baby 1-2 tablespoons of baby cereal in a bowl once a day at first then increase to 2 times a day. Breakfast and dinner work well. Cereal should never be fed from a bottle.
6. Be patient! Your baby may refuse to eat the cereal at first. Try it again in a few days.
7. Feed your baby only one new cereal a week. This way you can tell if this new food bothers your baby. If it does, don't feed your baby that food for one month. Then, try again.

## Did you know?

- Juice should be avoided until age 1.
- Add one new food at a time. Wait one week before giving your baby another new food.
- Never force your baby to finish a bottle or food. Your baby is the best judge of how much to eat.
- Do not heat bottles in the microwave. Microwaves do not heat evenly and can create very hot spots in liquids and foods!
- Children under the age of 1 should never be given honey. It can cause infant botulism, a deadly disease.
- Always talk to your baby's doctor if you have any questions about feeding your baby.

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