

Infant and Baby Nutrition – *milk for all needs*

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Breast milk provides all the nutrition a full-term baby born normal weight and growing steadily will need for the first six months. An exclusively breastfed baby needs nothing else but 10 µg of vitamin D supplement daily from the age of two weeks.

Baby-led breastfeeding, minimum of 8–12 times a day, guarantees that the amount of milk is exactly what the baby needs. It is not uncommon for a baby to eat more frequently in the first weeks.

If breast milk doesn't satisfy all the nutritional needs of

a baby over 4 months, it is better to begin supplementing with solids instead of formula. This will be better for the continuation of breastfeeding.

If the baby is exclusively formula-fed, you should start offering solids from the age of 4–6 months.

There is no hurry to start solids. The baby's gut matures slowly and is not ready to digest solids before the age of 4 months. You should always start offering solids according to your baby's individual development and needs, and not before the age of 4–6 months. Signs that indicate

	Exclusively breastfed	Supplemented breastfeeding	Formula-fed
0–4 months	Breast milk Vitamin D supplement starting from 2 weeks	Breast milk and formula Vitamin D supplement starting from 2 weeks	Formula Vitamin D supplement starting from 2 weeks
4–6 months	Breast milk Vitamin D supplement (Tasters according to individual needs)	Breast milk and formula Vitamin D supplement (Tasters according to individual needs)	Formula Vitamin D supplement (Solid foods according to individual needs)
6–10 months	Breast milk Vitamin D supplement Varied diet of vegetables, fruit and berries, cereals and meats in small portions fitting with the family's eating habits.	Breast milk and formula Vitamin D supplement Varied diet of vegetables, fruit and berries, cereals and meats in small portions fitting with the family's eating habits.	Formula Vitamin D supplement Varied diet of vegetables, fruit and berries, cereals and meats in small portions fitting with the family's eating habits.
10–12 months	Breast milk Vitamin D supplement Fermented dairy products Solid foods 5 meals a day	Breast milk and formula Vitamin D supplement Fermented dairy products Solid foods 5 meals a day	Formula Vitamin D supplement Fermented dairy products Solid foods 5 meals a day
12 months →	Healthy home cooked food with the rest of the family Vitamin D supplement Milk with meals Breastfeeding continues as long as the baby and the mother want	Healthy home cooked food with the rest of the family Vitamin D supplement Milk with meals Breastfeeding continues as long as the baby and the mother want	Healthy home cooked food with the rest of the family Vitamin D supplement Milk with meals





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your baby is developmentally ready for solids include sitting up supported, controlling head movements and developing hand-eye coordination when reaching for food.

Tasters for Beginners

You should offer solids first as little tasting portions (anything from a little morsel to a few teaspoonfuls). Offer these little portions after breastfeeding, it is not yet time to decrease the number of feedings. Finger foods are another option for introducing solids. Little by little the portion size will grow as eating becomes a routine and the baby gains new skills. If the baby is partially formula-fed, decrease the amount of formula as the baby eats more solids,

but maintain the breastfeeding schedule.

In addition to solid food, a baby over 6 months will need about 6dl of breast milk or formula per day. A breastfed baby will get that amount in about 3–5 feedings. The recommendation is to continue breastfeeding at least until the baby is one year old, or longer if it is the wish of the baby and the mother.

New Flavours and Family Mealtimes

Starting solids at the age of six months allows the baby to taste a variety of new foods right from the beginning. The current guidelines don't recommend the slow introduction of single new foods. The baby's digestive

system is ready to digest all kinds of foods at the age of 5–6 months, excluding dairy products. Dairy products can be introduced at the age of 10 months, starting with fermented products.

Let the baby take part in family mealtimes right from the beginning. The baby can eat the same food as the rest of the family, excluding high-sodium and sugary foods. You can separate a small portion for the baby before adding salt to a dish.

Coarser purees and porridges, large pieces of finger food to suck on and small pieces to practice his pincer grasp will help to develop the baby's oral motor skills and hand-eye coordination. There is no need

for smooth purees and thin porridge. As the baby practices eating on his own and explores utensils, the mealtimes are joyful and full of activity. This will naturally be messy, but mastering skills takes practice. It is not important how much the baby eats or how skilful he is. ♦

More information: Eating together – food recommendations for families with children National Institute for Health and Welfare, 2016

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