

# NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR 6 – 12 MONTHS

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS RECOMMENDS...** that all babies be breastfed for a minimum of one year or beyond a year for as long as mother and baby mutually desire to. If breastfeeding ends before one year of age, the AAP recommends that the infant be fed an iron-fortified formula. The AAP recommends solid foods to begin at six months, starting out slowly, and increasing as the baby gets closer to one year of age.



## WHY WAIT TILL NEAR 6 MONTHS?

Baby's tongue movements and swallowing skills are the first clues to why solid foods should be delayed. In the early months, babies have a reflex called tongue-thrust that causes the tongue to automatically push outward when any solid or foreign substance is placed upon it. This reflex is a protective reflex against choking on solids given too early. Sometime between 4-6 months the tongue-thrust reflex begins to diminish. Prior to 4 months most babies do not have good coordination of tongue, chewing and swallowing movements for solid foods.

It's about 6 months that gut closure takes place, which means less chance of causing allergies. As well the baby's immature intestines are not equipped to handle a variety of foods until around 6 months when many digestive enzymes seem to click in. Maturing intestines secrete the protein immunoglobulin IgA, which acts like a protective paint or coating of the intestines and prevents passage of harmful allergens, which can cause allergies. This protective IgA is low in early months and does not reach peak production until around seven months of age. The younger the intestinal tract the less well essential nutrients are absorbed from solid foods. This is why it's best to start out slowly and gradually increase over the second half of the first year remembering that the baby has its best absorption of essential nutrients from either breastmilk or formula in the first year of life, especially the first 6-9 months.

## A WORD ABOUT COMMERCIAL BABY FOODS...

- They are limited in offering all the nutrition baby needs
  - 1) Limited in fat content
  - 2) Limited in protein
  - 3) Limited in calories
- They limit the baby's opportunities to learn to build his skills at eating solid food (pureed can be swallowed and they don't learn to chew food).
- They are expensive
- They are NOT necessary
- If using commercial baby foods, add ½ - 1 teaspoon of olive oil to the jar which will add 20-40 calories per jar

## WHAT OFFERS ALL THE NUTRITION AND CALORIES BABY NEEDS? BREASTMILK and/or FORMULA

Breastmilk and formula offer 20 calories per ounce. They are a complete balance of carbohydrates, fats and proteins as well as vitamins and minerals. They are easily digested so that your child's absorption of nutrition is highest, especially breastmilk. If at 6 months your baby was drinking about 26-32 ounces of breastmilk or formula per day that is 520 – 640 calories per day. Now, read the label of a jar of baby food at the grocery store and do a little math. **How much baby food would the baby have to eat to get the same amount of calories?** Which is a whole lot more than the average baby would ever be able to consume.

## WHEN TO GET ...READY, SET, AND GO

### READINESS SIGNS...

- Sits up, alone or with support
- Can hold his head up straight
- Keeps tongue flat and low, no signs of tongue-thrust
- Mouths his fingers and toys
- Opens mouth when he sees something coming
- Turns head away when he doesn't want it
- Closes his lips over spoon or finger with food
- Keeps the food in his mouth and moves it around with tongue

### GETTING STARTED ON SOLIDS...

- Always offer breast or bottle before solids until past 9 months since these are complete balance meals
- Start by offering some mashed banana or avocado on **your finger** (you can use a spoon after the baby decides he likes food)
- Keep portions small 1-2 tablespoons
- Always respect baby, don't force, and keep feedings FUN
- Offer 1-2 times daily till around 8 months then more often

## IDEAL WAY TO GET STARTED

**WHAT FOODS TO START WITH?** Traditionally of infant cereal mixed with your breastmilk, but infant cereals are not very tasty and offer very little nutritional value. Baby food cereals are mostly empty calorie fillers with too little fat and protein and calories.

### NUTRITIOUS FOODS TO START WITH IN THIS ORDER:

1. **Mashed bananas or mashed avocados\***  
\*Great food for babies, with iron & high unsaturated fats
2. **Soft cooked meats** are high in protein, iron and zinc. Chopped beef, stew meat, tender pieces of chicken, turkey or fish can be mashed or ground up in a **Happy Baby Food Grinder**.
3. **Baked or soft cooked, mashed** - sweet potatoes, squash, carrots, green beans apples, peaches, pears, etc.
3. **Dairy products after 8 months:** Yo-Baby yogurt, cottage cheese, slice cheese. NO cow's milk till baby is 1 years old.

### IMPORTANT POINTS when starting solids:

- At about 6 months, offer once per day to start with. Pick a time when baby seems interested, but shortly following a feeding of breast or bottle. Remember, baby gets more nutrition from breastmilk or formula at this age than from solid foods. Think of solid foods as desserts. We offer them at this age to give the baby an opportunity to build their skills at chewing food.
- Follow your baby's interest and build on his skills. If the baby enjoys solids and gets excited when you offer a taste of what you are eating. You can begin more than one feeding of solid foods per day as your baby becomes more interested. Let your baby be the guide, not the calendar.
- Continue to offer breastmilk or formula first before solids till around 9 months. Nine months on, offer the baby solid foods at every family meal and nutritious snacks between meals to your baby's interest. By this time baby should be doing well with finger feeding and encouraged to feed self. Self feeding builds baby's interest in feeding but also allows baby to become proficient with gross and fine motor skills. Continue to offer breast or bottle several times per day. Remember offer, don't insist.
- The goal is to have baby eating about the same foods as the family by the end of the first year and eating a wide variety of foods from all food groups. After one year, don't offer breast, but don't refuse if baby indicates desire to breastfeed. Weaning should be encouraged with respect to the mother and baby's readiness to wean. It's best when weaning goes slowly with respect to the baby.

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## WHAT ABOUT ALLERGIES?

When starting solids, it is usually recommended to introduce only one new food at a time and wait for **4-7 days** before introducing another new food. This is in order to watch for signs of an allergy to a food. Allergic reactions or food intolerances can vary and can be hard to identify. Waiting several days between offering a new food helps to identify allergies more easily.

### COMMON ALLERGIC REACTIONS COULD INCLUDE:

<b>Rashes or Hives</b>	<b>Sore bottom</b>	<b>Asthma</b>
<b>Wheezing</b>	<b>Diarrhea</b>	<b>Vomiting</b>
<b>Congestion</b>	<b>Red/itchy eyes</b>	<b>Intestinal upsets</b>
<b>Ear Infections</b>	<b>Irritability</b>	<b>Constipation</b>

If a food is suspected to be causing a problem, eliminate that food from the diet for a few weeks and then try it again. If it still seems to cause a problem, wait several months before trying it again. Many times infants will outgrow allergies or sensitivities if they are taken out of their diet till the child is older.

### MOST COMMON FOODS TO CAUSE ALLERGIES:

<b>Berries</b>	<b>Coconut</b>	<b>Nuts</b>	<b>Soy</b>
<b>Buckwheat</b>	<b>Corn</b>	<b>Peas</b>	<b>Sugar</b>
<b>Chocolate</b>	<b>Tomatoes</b>	<b>Pork</b>	<b>Wheat</b>
<b>Cinnamon</b>	<b>Egg whites*</b>	<b>Yeast</b>	<b>Mustard</b>
<b>Cow's Milk*</b>	<b>Peanut butter*</b>	<b>Shellfish</b>	<b>Citrus</b>

#### Learn to read labels if you have a potential allergic infant.

\* These are the most common allergic foods. Wait till after first birthday to introduce cow's milk and egg whites.

## GAGGING AND CHOKING

Babies and the young child are going to gag. The gag reflex is a neurological safety mechanism that, in normal developing children helps prevent choking. When food slips to the back of their tongue before they are ready to swallow it, the gag reflex shoves the foods back out. This helps the child to learn to chew their food better before swallowing. Gagging is a normal part of learning to eat and a sign of a normal swallowing reflex. It's important not to react or intervene when your baby gags. If you don't react, then the child won't react. He will go right on eating and learning to build his skills at eating.

How to know the difference? While gagging is to be expected, choking is dangerous. As long as you can hear your child coughing and you can hear an exchange of air through the throat, your child is probably just fine. But, if the child is making no sound or a whistling, wheeze sound, she is choking and needs your assistance. Choking is more likely to happen when the child eats a hard, formed food or if the child is excited, laughing or crying. By sticking with soft, moist foods in the first 3 years, choking is usually avoided.

### AVOID TILL MUCH OLDER DUE TO EASY OF CHOKING

<b>Nuts</b>	<b>Hard beans</b>	<b>Hard Candy</b>
<b>Seeds</b>	<b>Raw Apples</b>	<b>Raw Carrots</b>
<b>Chips</b>	<b>Popcorn kernels</b>	<b>Grapes</b>
<b>Corn</b>	<b>Chewing gum</b>	<b>Raisins*</b>

\*Raisins are a wonderful snack food for a pre-school child. They are rich in iron and protein, but they stick to the teeth like candy and are high in fructose. Always, brush baby's teeth after eating raisins. They are known to cause cavities.

## FINGER FOODS & SELF FEEDING ARE A MUST!!!!!!

### 8-12 MONTHS (SOME BABIES EVEN EARLIER)

Babies delight in being able to self-feed. Yes, it can be messy, but it is worth the mess. Self-feeding gives children a good feeling about food and eating. It is important to give your child control of his feedings. By doing so, it will greatly reduce the chance of feeding difficulties as the child grows older. The thumb and forefinger pincer grasp (a fine motor skill & developmental milestone) should be encouraged. What better way to encourage the use of this developmental skill than to allow the baby to pick up small morsels of soft food and feed himself. There will be plenty of time later to build feeding skills with utensils.

## SAFE AND FAVORITE FINGER FOODS:

<b>Deli Turkey</b>	<b>O-shaped cereals</b>
<b>Salmon</b>	<b>Rice cakes/unsalted</b>
<b>Well-cooked Carrots</b>	<b>Whole wheat toast</b>
<b>Whole-wheat bagel</b>	<b>Scrambled egg yolk</b>
<b>Cooked dehulled peas</b>	<b>Cooked Pasta pieces</b>
<b>Avocado dips or chunks</b>	<b>Tofu chunks</b>
<b>Green beans well cooked</b>	<b>Teething biscuits</b>
<b>Grated apple, peaches or pears</b>	

Slivers of finely chopped meat softened with broth, water, breastmilk or mixed with avocado. Most any soft, moist, cooked veggie, soft ripe fruit, or sliced deli meats and cheese. **FOR ADDED FAT**, sprinkle foods with olive or coconut oil.



## IMPORTANT ATTITUDES ABOUT FEEDING

Some babies have teeth at 3 months, most around 6 months and a few not till closer to 12 months. Some babies are walking at 9 months, and some not till 15 months. There are wide ranges of normal and wide ranges of individuality. We help our child to establish healthy feeding habits from the very earliest feedings. Keep in mind some important principles to allow development of healthy feeding habits.

- Rule number one is feed the baby when he is hungry, no schedules.
- Feed the baby as much or as little as they wish, offering baby respect, and control over their appetite.
- They are capable of regulating their food intake.
- They generally react negatively to new foods but will usually accept them with time and experience if not pushed.
- Parents can either support or disrupt children's food acceptance and food regulation.
- Parents are responsible for what is presented to eat and in the manner in which it is presented.
- Children are responsible for how much and even whether they eat.
- As with everything in child rearing, it's extremely important to remember...what Ellen Satter, MS, RD says: **Children want to grow up. They have built within them the nagging need to get better at everything they do. Eating is no exception.**

## CUPS, GLASS, SIPPY CUP...WHEN?

There is no set time to begin. Follow the baby's readiness. When your baby is sitting in your lap and you are drinking WATER and the baby reaches for the glass, this is the best time to offer the baby a drink from a glass or cup. Learning to drink from a cup or glass or straw happens when a baby is interested and wants to copy you. Give the baby opportunities and as he builds his skills you can start to offer with more frequency. **A word about sippy cups**, they are called sippy cups for a reason, the baby takes a sip here and another sip later. Don't expect the baby to drink several ounces from a sippy cup at one sitting.

**WHAT ABOUT JUICE...** babies receive very little nutritional benefit from juice, even 100% juice. Juice is loaded with fructose, a natural sugar. Its high sugar content can dull a baby's appetite for more nutritious foods and affect their blood sugars leading to an irritable baby. The AAP suggest offering juice after the baby can drink

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from a cup. No more than a couple of ounces, preferably mixed with water. The AAP recommends that 6 year olds not have more than 6 oz of juice per day. Water is the best drink for thirst.

**A WORD ABOUT MILK...**...milk does the body good?... more to the truth, it does the dairy industry good. Cow's milk is the number one food sensitivity. If your baby enjoys milk then milk can be given in a cup after one year of age. If your child **has eczema, stays congested, or has frequent ear infections**, think about cow's milk allergies. If the child doesn't like milk, don't insist. Feed calcium rich foods, such as yogurt, cheese, green leafy vegetables (spinach), almond butter, broccoli, tofu, soybeans, dried figs, and refried beans just to mention a few. **After the first year, water should be the preferred drink of choice to satisfy thirst and properly hydrate baby.**

## THINK NUTRITIOUS!

- Brain food is protein and fat
- Babies are very active & fast growing, needing high fat diets
- There are good fats and bad fats, so know your fats
  - 1) Best fats are unsaturated fats like: avocado, olive oil, coconut oil, canola/safflower oil, nut butter, and fish.
  - 2) Saturated fats are primarily from animal sources such as meat, eggs, and dairy. For the first 2 years, don't limit these fats, but as the child gets older begin to gradually limit these type of fats in his diet.
- Some foods have more nutrition and calories per ounce than others. Babies eat small quantities so it's real important that what they eat have plenty of nutrition and calories.
- **THE TOP TEN NUTRITIOUS DENSE FOODS ARE:**

<b>Avocado</b>	<b>Nut Butter</b> (especially almond)
<b>Brown Rice</b>	<b>Cheese</b>
<b>Kidney Beans</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
<b>Eggs</b>	<b>Whole Grains</b>
<b>Fish (salmon, tuna)</b>	<b>Tofu</b>
- **DYNAMITE NUTRITIOUS DENSE IDEAS**
  - Mixing avocado with meats or other foods
  - Mash up a boiled egg yolk with avocado
  - Yo-Baby Yogurt with a tablespoon of wheat germ (let sit till wheat germ is soggy)
  - Almond butter on whole-wheat toast or bagel

**THINK OUTSIDE OF POLITICALY CORRECT WHEN OFFERING FOODS AND THINK NUTRITIOUS DENSE!**



## NORMAL PHYSICAL GROWTH PATTERNS

Age	Ideal Gain	Acceptable Gain
Birth - 4-6 months	7 oz per week	4-5 oz per week
4 - 6 months	4-5 oz per week	
6 - 12 months	2-4 oz per week	

The average breastfed baby doubles his birth weight by 4-6 months. Growth in length averages about ½ inch per week and head circumference is about ¼ inch per month. By one year, the baby should be about 2 ½ times his birth weight, has increased his birth length by 50%, and his head circumference by 33%.

## HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

**INCREASE FEEDING FREQUENCY AS THE BABY GETS OLDER**

**6-8 Month old feed solids 1-3 times per day (start slow)**

**9-11 Month old feed solids 3-4 times per day**

**12-24 Month old feed solids 4-5 times per day**

**FOLLOW YOUR CHILD'S INTEREST! OFFER FREQUENTLY!**

## PORTION SIZES FOR 1 – 3 YEAR OLD

Meat, poultry, fish	1 – 2 Tablespoons
Eggs	¼ Egg
Cooked dried beans	1 – 2 Tablespoons
Pasta, rice, potatoes	1 – 2 Tablespoons
Bread	¼ Slice
Vegetables	1 – 3 Tablespoons
Fruit	1 – 2 Tablespoons or ¼ piece
Milk	¼ - 1/3 Cup
Fats and Oils	To appetite
Sugars and Sweets	As little as possible

- **1000 – 1300 Calories per day on average\***
- **Protein needs: 1 gram per pound of child's body weight per day**
- **Ideal balanced nutrition:**
  - 50-55% carbohydrates**
  - 35-40 percent fats**
  - 10-15% proteins**

Use only as a guide; calorie needs vary considerably according to preferences, development and individuality.

## WHAT IF BABY JUST ISN'T INTERESTED IN SOLIDS?

Some babies just aren't interested in solids at 6 months, 7 months, 8 months or older. Don't get anxious, as the baby will know. If you have a baby who isn't interested and turns up their nose at everything, don't push. Keep them on the breast or formula and continue to offer from time to time. Once the baby is about 8 months old start sitting him in your lap when you eat and allow the baby to reach into your plate and self feed. Just have on your plate appropriate foods for the age of baby. Some kids, it has to be completely their idea!



## PRACTICAL & SAFETY TIPS

- Practice good hygiene and proper food handing
- Avoid stringy foods such as celery and string beans
- Pick out fish bones before mashing fish.
- Avoid commercial white bread that can form a pasty glob which baby can choke on. Toast it.
- Cut meat and poultry across the grain, into tiny fingertip pieces rather than in choke able chunks.
- Spread nut butters on toast or bagel. Don't feed by spoonful. They can glob and choking can occur.
- Avoid use of raw honey & corn syrups; they may contain botulism.
- Scatter only a few morsels of finger foods on baby's plate or tray at a time. Too much in a pile encourages whole handed gorging rather than individual bites. Adding more to their plate as they eat.
- **NEVER** leave a baby or small child alone while they are eating anything.

## NUTRITIONAL RECOMMENDED READING

*My Child Won't Eat*, Carlos Gonzalez, M.D.

*The Family Nutrition Book* by William Sears, M.D.

*Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense or*

*How to Get Kids to Eat...but not too much*

both by Ellen Satter, MS, RD

## WEANING FROM BREAST OR BOTTLE



"I don't mind the boots, but the spurs have to go."

*The following questions and answers are quotes taken from the book **What Every Child Would Like His Parents to Know** written by Dr. Lee Salk. Dr. Salk was an eminent and well respected child psychologist. He was Director of Division of Pediatric Psychology at The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center and Professor of Psychology and Pediatrics at Cornell University Medical College at the writing of **What Every Child Would Like His Parents to Know** in 1973. He is also a co-author of **How to Raise A Human Being**. His books are out of print, but his wisdom is timeless.*

### **How should I wean my child?**

"Gradually.....the parent who decides that at a predetermined moment his child must give up the nipple and take on the difficult task of drinking from a cup frustrates the infant. The double difficulty is that his frustration increases the child's desire for sucking satisfaction, which is his means of coping with stress. In other words, if the weaning process itself produces stress, the desire for sucking gratification increases as an important means for minimizing stress. A vicious circle is set in motion."

### **Will my child be permanently affected by frustration of his sucking needs?**

"I want to emphasize that frustrating your baby's desire for sucking does not teach him to give up his desire for sucking. Satisfying the need does."

### **How long will weaning take?**

"Longer than most people think."

### **What will happen if I wean my baby too soon?**

"Weaning your baby too soon will tend to prolong his desire for sucking and encourage other means of oral gratification. A child weaned too soon is frustrated during an early stage in his life, the oral stage, when he has little tolerance for frustration. He may start to distrust the people who have caused his distress. He may find it increasingly difficult to relax and may withdraw from reality by sleeping, which at least removes the frustration he experiences when awake."

Severely frustrating your baby's sucking needs can predispose your child to serious emotional problems. He will have a very low frustration tolerance."

### **Are there problems if I wait too long to wean my child?**

"Weaning your child too late is by no means as detrimental as doing it too soon."

### **When, then, is the best time for me to wean my child from the breast or bottle?**

"The best answer to this question is probably an indefinite one. Because of individual differences, some babies can be weaned when they are close to one year of age; others may require a bottle (or breast) until they are three, or in some instances, even older.....since the primary task for a baby in the first year of his life is to develop a sense of trust, and since you will be minimizing frustration during this time, avoid frustrating your baby's need for suckling satisfaction. Don't try to wean him completely in his first year. Wait well beyond the first year, and begin slowly, while you're teaching your child to feed himself."

### **Needs vs. Habits by James L. Hymes, Jr.**

Mothers sometimes wonder if nursing is just a habit for their child, and if he might be just fine if he were weaned. Occasionally, this could be the case. In the book *The Child Under Six*, James L. Hymes Jr. offers this classic definition of how to determine the difference between needs and habits:

"If it was easy to break, it was a habit. If you run into any major difficulty at all, beware, you probably are not dealing with an old worn out habit. Chances are that you are tampering with a need. Habits fade away with a little counter-push. If you ignore basic needs, or try to block them, they shoot sky high. If you treat needs as if they were habits, all you do is to make them go on longer and stronger and more powerfully than ever."

One way to decide if your child is nursing out of habit or need is to try some gentle weaning techniques, carefully observing your child's reaction. You will notice quickly if your child balks or becomes distressed. This may indicate nursing is still a strong need. On the other hand, you may be surprised to find that your child is ready to wean and just needed a little assistance from you. In either case, looking to your child will give you the information you need to decide."

For more thoughts on weaning readiness go to

<http://patlc.com/weaning.htm>

### **Weaning Recommended Reading**

*Mothering Your Nursing Toddler* by Norma Jane Bumgarner  
*How Weaning Happens* by Diane Bengson  
*The Nursing Mother's Guide to Weaning* by Kathleen Huggins

### **Sleep Recommended Reading**

*The No-Cry Sleep Solution* by Elizabeth Pantley  
*Good Nights* by Dr. Jay Gordon  
*Sweet Dreams* by Dr. Paul Fleiss  
*Nighttime Parenting* by Dr. William Sears