

# ABOUT US

## KMHC Nutrition Outpatient Clinic

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## KATERI MEMORIAL HOSPITAL CENTRE

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**Disclaimer** This information is not meant to replace individual counseling with a professional dietitian (P.Dt.) It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

**Sources** Institut national de santé publique du Québec (2024). From Tiny Tot to Toddler.  
Health Canada, Canadian Paediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada, & Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (2014). Nutrition for healthy term infants: Recommendations from six to 24 months.  
Food Allergy Canada (2023). Eat Early Eat Often.  
Food Allergy Canada (2019). Early introduction of allergens: FAQs for families.

**Pictures** [www.gettyimages.com](http://www.gettyimages.com)

# BABY'S 1<sup>st</sup> YEAR

## Nutrition *guide*



## KATERI MEMORIAL HOSPITAL CENTRE

Department of Nutrition



## Raising a food-savvy kid starts in the first year !

Get the know-how you need to help your baby develop a lifetime of healthy eating habits.

## Foods to avoid

- **Baby cereal added to the bottle.** It increases the risk of obesity and will not improve your baby's sleep.
- **Salt, sugar and spices.**
- Foods with **sugar added** such as candies, cakes, puddings, etc.
- **Honey.** Even if pasteurized or cooked into food, it poses a risk of food poisoning (botulism). **Wait until after 1 year old.**
- **Soy, almond, rice or coconut beverages** as a replacement for milk. Even if enriched, they do not contain enough fat to meet your baby's needs. **Wait until after 2 years old.**
- **Fruit Juice.**

## Babies and children don't need juice.

Too much juice can cause diarrhea, anemia (lack of iron) and can fill up small stomachs, decreasing your baby's appetite for nutritious foods.

Too much juice can also cause tooth decay and rapid weight gain.



**Only offer water** between planned meals and snacks., or to rinse mouth after meals.

Help them drink from an **open cup** for them to master drinking faster and to prevent cavities !



## If you suspect a food allergy.



When introducing common food allergens (egg, fish, sea-food, peanuts, nuts, sesame seeds, soy, wheat, mustard seeds), **wait a few days before offering another new food** to allow time to detect a possible food allergy.

**If you think your baby is allergic to a food, stop giving it and get medical advice. Call 9-1-1 if your baby shows signs of :**

- Swelling of the mouth, tongue or throat.
- Trouble breathing, swallowing or speaking.
- Pale or blue colour of the face or lips.
- Fainting or passing out.
- Hives that are spreading.

## 0 to 6 months

What to offer	Why	How much
<b>Breast Milk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It provides the exact amount of vitamins and minerals babies need to develop, except for vitamin D.</li> <li>• It adapts during feeding and over time to match changing needs.</li> <li>• It is easier to digest, so there is less chance of constipation or diarrhea.</li> <li>• It contains antibodies that help your baby prevent or fight off diseases.</li> <li>• It helps both your baby and yourself to reach and maintain a healthy weight.</li> </ul>	<b>On demand</b> (p.4)
<b>Iron-fortified Infant Formula</b>	<b>If breastfeeding is not possible, see recommendations on p. 5</b>	
<b>Vitamin D Drops</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since it is best to avoid direct sun exposure for babies, they do not get enough vitamin D.</li> <li>• Commercial infant formulas in Canada are fortified with vitamin D.</li> </ul>	10 µg (400 IU) daily <b><u>if exclusively or partially breastfed.</u></b>

# Feed on demand

## Let baby decide if and how much to eat

Feed when they are showing signs of hunger and stop when they are full. This will **provide them with the right amount of food** for optimal growth and **teach them to trust their appetite** in order to maintain a healthy weight for life !

## Recognize and respond to feeding cues



Allergens	Examples	Notes
<b>Egg</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SF: 1/2 to 1 tsp of well cooked egg in fruit/veg puree or baby cereal</li> <li>BLW: Pancake/waffle made with eggs; strip of omelette</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Peanut*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SF: 1/2 to 1 tsp of peanut butter in hot water, baby's milk, baby cereal or fruit/veg puree</li> <li>BLW: 1/2 to 1 tsp of peanut butter on cracker</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Nuts*</b> (almond, Brazil nut, cashew, hazelnut, macadamia, pecan, pine nut, pistachio, walnut)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SF: 1/2 to 1 tsp of nut butter mixed in hot water, baby's milk, baby cereal or fruit/veg puree; nut milk (cashew, almond) in baby cereal</li> <li>BLW: 1/2 to 1 tsp of nut butter on cracker</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
* Do not offer whole peanuts/nuts or peanut/nut butter by spoonful before the age of four to prevent choking. * If peanut is tolerated, keep offering 3-4 times per week to maintain tolerance. * Each nut must be introduced individually. Introduce the ones you eat at home.		
<b>Soy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SF: Soft plain tofu in fruit/veg puree</li> <li>BLW: Tofu sticks or cubes</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Mustard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SF: Powder or condiment in veg/meat puree</li> <li>BLW: Use powder or condiment to marinate meat, or add to meatballs</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Fish / Shellfish*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SF: Pureed fish; crushed soft-fleshed fish with milk (as needed)</li> <li>BLW: Fish in strips or cubes; homemade nuggets</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
* Each fish and seafood must be introduced individually, and all must be thoroughly cooked. Introduce the ones you eat at home.		
<b>Sesame</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SF: 1/2 to 1 tsp of tahini in baby cereal</li> <li>BLW: Thin layer of hummus on cracker</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>



# Introduce allergens

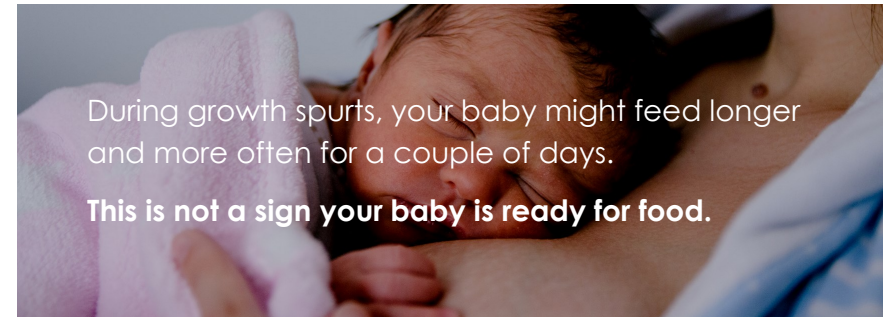
**Introduction to allergens early in life may prevent developing food allergies.**

- Start introducing allergens at home when the baby is around 6 months old, but not before the age of 4 months.
- Introduce a new allergen every three days and closely monitor any allergic reaction (e.g. rash, hives, lip/face/tongue swelling, vomiting, difficult breathing). (p.18)
- Most allergic reactions occur within 2 hours after eating, and some can occur up to 72 hours later. Severe allergic reactions is very rare in the first ingestion of peanut/eggs.
- Allergenic food should be spoon fed to the baby to avoid misinterpreting skin reactions as food allergy.



Allergens	Examples	Notes
<b>Wheat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SF: Wheat-based baby cereal; cream of wheat</li><li>• BLW: Piece of toasted wheat bread</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Dairy (Milk)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SF: Plain yogurt (alone or in fruit puree)</li><li>• BLW: Fresh cheese (ricotta, cottage) on cracker</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

## Breastfeeding during growth spurts



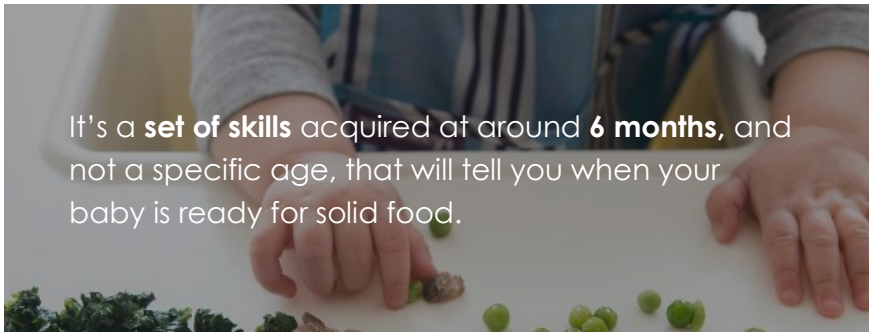
During growth spurts, your baby might feed longer and more often for a couple of days.

**This is not a sign your baby is ready for food.**

## If breastfeeding is not possible

- Use a **store-bought iron-fortified formula** for the first **9 to 12 months**.
- Formula should be **cow milk-based**.
- A **special formula could be required** if your baby has intolerances, allergies or certain diseases.
- Homemade formulas are not recommended as they can cause severe malnutrition and potentially fatal illness in infants.
- Soy, rice or other plant-based beverages, even when fortified, are not appropriate as a breast milk substitute as they are nutritionally incomplete for infants.
- Talk to your doctor if you are unsure which formula is best for your baby.

# Ready for solids ?



It's a **set of skills** acquired at around **6 months**, and not a specific age, that will tell you when your baby is ready for solid food.

## Start introducing solids when your baby :

1. **Sits on the floor by themselves without support**
2. **Has good head control**
3. **Shows interest in foods**, picks it up and tries to bring it to their mouth
4. **Opens their mouth** when they see food coming
5. **Holds food in their mouth** without pushing it out on their tongue
6. **Can lean back or turn their head away** to show they are full



# Patience !

## Give your baby time to feed themselves.

They need to **explore food through their 5 senses**. Putting food in and out of their mouth many times and making a mess is all part of the learning!

## Give your baby time to appreciate new foods.

It may take **8-10 tries or more** for your baby to accept a new food.

This is common. Don't force your baby to eat. Instead, try these tips :

- Offer new foods when your baby is in a **good mood**.
- Feed your baby when **others are eating**.
- Let your baby **feed themselves** with fingers or fists.
- Offer new foods **with foods already liked**.
- **Offer the food again** in a few days, and again!
- Serve the foods in a **different texture or temperature**.



# Safety Tips



- Sit your baby in a **high chair**.
- **Supervise** them.
- **Chop stringy meat** (steak...) and add broth to moisten it.
- **Grate hard vegetable** (raw carrot) to make it easier to chew.
- **Cook hard fruits and vegetables** to soften them.
- **Slice round soft foods** (grapes) lengthwise into 4.
- **Remove pits** from fruits (grapes, oranges, watermelon...).
- **Spread sticky foods** (peanut butter) **thinly on a cracker or toast** rather than soft bread.
- **Do not offer hot dogs**. If you do, slice them lengthwise.
- **Don't feed your child: whole nuts, popcorn, raisins, hard or gummy candies, snacks on a toothpick, or fish with bones** until they are 4 years old.



## Gagging is part of learning how to eat.

**If your baby gags, stay calm and do not pat them on the back.** It means food has moved to the back of the tongue too quickly and needs to be moved forward. Trust in their ability to bring food out of their mouth. Never try to remove food from their mouth with your fingers.



What to offer	Why	How much
Breast Milk or Formula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Remains the main source of nutrition</b> as other foods are introduced until 2 years and beyond.</li> </ul>	On demand
Iron-Rich Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Start with foods that contain iron</b>, which your baby needs for many aspects of their development : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft-cooked, pureed, mashed, minced or finely chopped <b>meat, chicken or fish</b></li> <li>• Well-cooked mashed <b>eggs, tofu, lentils, kidney beans</b></li> <li>• <b>Iron-fortified infant cereals</b> mixed with breast milk or infant formula</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Cook with <b>no added salt, sugar or spices</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Let them decide if and how much to eat.</b> (p.12)</p> <p><b>Offer solid foods at family meals.</b> (p.13)</p>



## After iron-rich foods

**Introduce other foods in any order you want.**

**Healthy foods that your whole family is eating** are the best choice for your baby. Prepare it **plain**, with no added salt, sugar or spices.



What to offer	6 - 9 months	9 - 12 months
<b>Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer pureed or soft mashed vegetables such as potatoes, avocado, carrot, zucchinis, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move to soft vegetables.</li> </ul>
<b>Fruits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer pureed cooked fruits or very ripe mashed fruits such as banana.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try soft fresh fruits, peeled, seeded and diced or canned fruit packed in water.</li> </ul>

## Family Meals

- **Include your baby at family meals.** They will learn best how to eat by watching others around them. Don't forget that **breast milk or formula is still baby's most important food.** Don't worry about how much they eat at the family table.
- **Provide a safe learning environment.** Secure them in a high chair. Prepare foods to prevent choking ([p. 14](#)).
- **Stay away from distractions.** Turn off electronic devices such as TV, computer or phone, turn the music down and keep toys away. This will help you and your baby stay focused on feeding cues.
- **Expect and allow a mess.** Your baby learns about foods the same way they explore the rest of the world, by using their eyes, hands, nose and mouth. Wait until they are done with eating before you clean the floor and wash their face. This will allow them to focus on feeding cues and learning experience.





# Feed on demand

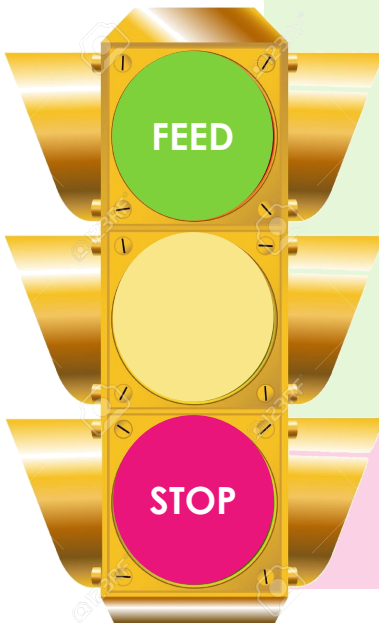
## Let them decide if and how much to eat

**Follow your baby's cues** for how much to feed. Start with 1 meal a day, ideally breakfast or lunch.

It is normal if your baby eats a different amount from one day to the next. **Never trick or coax them to eat more** by playing games or offering sweetened foods. Babies who are allowed to follow their own hunger cues are more likely to



## Recognize and respond to feeding cues



Offer soft finger foods from the family table. Allow them to feed themselves and experience the food.

If spoon feeding, sit face to face. Hold a small amount of food on the tip of a baby spoon and **wait for them to open their mouth before you feed them.** Start by offering 1-2 teaspoons. **Do not rush or force them to eat.**

**Stop when they shut their mouth,** turn their head, push food away or no longer seems interested.

## Textures

**Start offering a variety of textures right away,** such as pureed, mashed, finely chopped and lumpy foods. Diversity will help your baby acquire eating skills faster. You can also give your baby soft finger foods starting at six months to help them learn how to feed themselves.



What to offer	6 - 9 months	9 - 12 months
<b>Grains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try whole grains such as oatmeal, cream of wheat or small pieces of dry toast.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer other plain cereals such as plain Cheerios, rice and pasta.</li> </ul>
<b>Dairy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer full fat yogurt (3.25% m.f. or higher), cottage cheese or grated cheese.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Offer full fat (3.25%) cow's milk until 2 years old.</b></li> <li><b>Limit cow's milk to 16-24 oz. (500-750 mL) per day</b> to prevent displacing other important foods. Offer it with meals or snacks.</li> </ul>



Parents may let the baby self-feed with appropriate solid foods, instead of traditional spoon-feeding with purees.

### Pros

1. More family mealtime.
2. Greater food enjoyment and less picky eating.
3. Better appetite regulation and satiety awareness.
4. Promote motor skill development.
5. Cheaper and more convenient for parents.

### Cons

1. It may be messy and take longer to finish the meal.
2. It may be difficult to know how much the baby eats.
3. The baby may not eat enough iron.
4. Parents may worry about choking.

## Reducing the risks

- Offer iron-rich, high-energy foods at every meal. (p.7)
- Always supervise when the baby is eating.
- Avoid unsafe foods. (p.14)
- Distinguish gagging and choking. (p.14)
- Do not put a solid food in the baby's mouth, or try to remove food from their mouth with your finger.

## Implementing baby-led weaning

- **Do not start before the age of 6 months.**
- The baby should sit upright in a safe chair, ideally with their feet resting on a footrest.
- Offer foods with appropriate textures with minimal risk of choking: **soft enough to be mashed between fingers, length of at least the child's fist, thickness of 1 to 2 fingers.**
- **Safe food examples:** pancakes, meatloaf, eggs, tofu, cooked carrots, ripe banana, kiwis, avocado.
- Offer a few foods at a time.
- Allow the baby to explore foods and eat at their own pace.
- Do not mix solid foods with pureed foods.
- Allow the baby to explore foods and eat at their own pace.

Parents can combine baby-led weaning and traditional spoon-feeding as long as the baby is leading the feeding process.