



Feeding your preterm baby

**A guide to breastfeeding, bottle-feeding
and introducing solid foods**



**Information for parents from the
Neonatal Follow-up Clinic**

If you are breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding provides nutrition and comfort, develops your baby's sense of trust and security, and protects your baby from harmful germs.
- Breastfeeding may continue for 2 years or longer if you and your baby desire.
- Breastfeed your baby whenever he or she is hungry. The following chart is a general guide to breastfeeding in the first 12 months.

Baby's Corrected Age	Number of feeds each day	Comments
1 to 4 weeks	8 to 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preterm babies may not suck very effectively at first. You may need to pump (express milk) to protect your milk supply. • Preterm babies are usually breastfeeding well within 4 weeks of their expected due date. • When your baby is breastfeeding well and growing, you can stop pumping.
1 to 3 months	8 to 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you are on a regular schedule, reduce to 8 to 10 feedings a day. • Your baby may feed more often when going through a growth spurt or when they simply want more milk.
4 to 6 months	5 to 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As your baby grows, there are longer times between feedings. • Your baby may feed more often during a growth spurt or when they simply want more milk.
6 to 12 months	3 to 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When your baby begins to have solid foods, reduce to 3 to 8 feedings a day. • This will depend on the amount of solids your baby eats and whether they are going through a growth spurt.
<p>If you have questions or need help with breastfeeding, call:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a public health nurse or lactation consultant • your family doctor, nurse practitioner or pediatrician 		

If you are bottle-feeding

- It is best to give your baby a formula with added iron (iron-fortified) until 12 months of age.
- Follow your baby's signs of hunger (cues) to know when he or she is ready to feed. The following chart is a general guide for feedings.

Baby's Corrected Age	Number of bottles a day	Amount in each bottle	Average amount in 24 hours
1 to 4 weeks	6 to 10	2 to 3 ounces	12 to 20 ounces Many preterm babies need extra support at first, to reach their feeding and growth goals. If feedings are taking longer than an hour and growth is less than 180 grams a week, talk with your doctor, dietitian or occupational therapist.
3 to 8 weeks	6 to 8	4 to 5 ounces	20 to 30 ounces
2 to 5 months	5 to 6	5 to 7 ounces	25 to 37 ounces
5 to 9 months	4 to 6	5 to 8 ounces	25 to 40 ounces
9 to 12 months	3 to 4	6 to 7 ounces	21 to 28 ounces
Over 1 year	2 to 3	6 to 8 ounces	Give your baby 16 to 18 ounces of formula a day to encourage your baby to eat more solid foods. You can change to homogenized milk when your toddler is eating a wide variety of foods.

Iron and Vitamin D Supplements

- Preterm babies need more iron than full-term babies.
- All babies need 400 IU of Vitamin D each day.
- Your dietitian or doctor will review your baby's needs for vitamins and minerals.

When do I start to give my baby solid foods?

By 6 months of age your baby may be ready for solid foods if he/she:

- can sit up with very little help and has good control of his/her neck muscles
- can hold food in his/her mouth without pushing it out on his/her tongue right away
- opens his/her mouth when food is offered
- shows interest in food when others are eating
- can turn his/her head to refuse food

What solid food should I give my baby first?

Start with iron-fortified cereal or meat. These foods contain iron, which helps with your baby's development.

Prepare a tablespoon of food. Offer small amounts to your baby on a spoon.

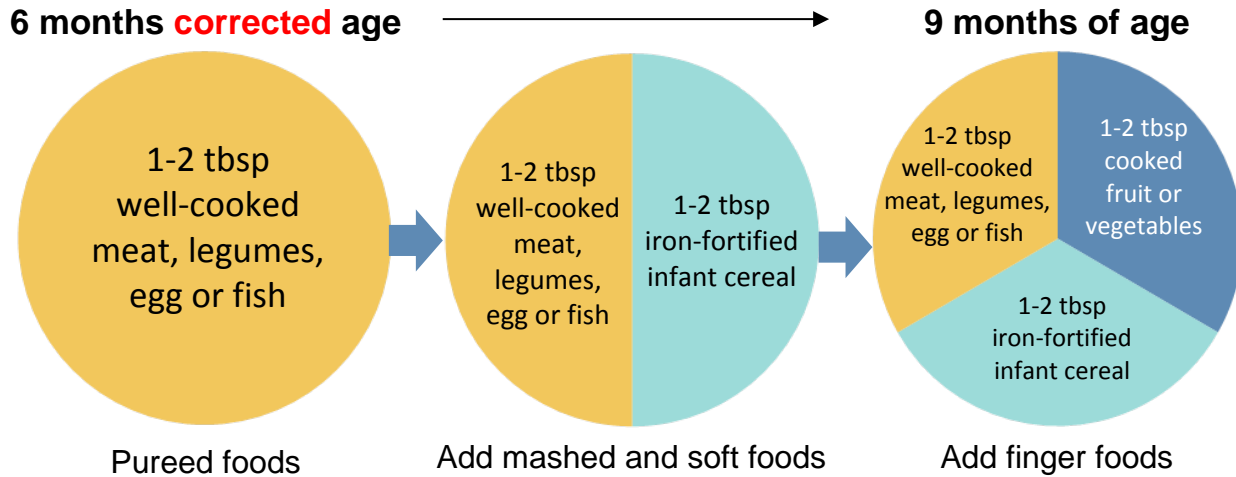


How do I introduce solid foods?

Here are some helpful tips:

- Introduce foods one at a time, about 2 to 3 days apart.
 - Start with a small amount and increase as your baby shows interest.
 - Meal times should always be enjoyable and an opportunity to learn new skills. Let your baby explore food by touching and tasting. We don't recommend tricking or coaxing your baby by playing games or offering sweetened foods.
 - Try making your own baby food by pureeing meat, fish, stews, vegetables, and fruits. You will be able to offer your baby a wider variety of foods and texture. It also costs less.
-

How do I increase solid foods?



When do I give foods with more texture?

As your baby develops, he/she will be able to have foods with more texture.

Every baby is unique and will progress to foods with greater texture at their own rate. Be patient as your baby learns to eat.

Your baby's development	Number of meals and snacks a day	Texture of food
Sitting with support	2 to 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pureed, mashed and semi-solid foods
Sitting on own	2 to 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small amounts of soft mashed foods with few lumps
Crawling	3 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground soft mashed foods or foods that dissolve - such as whole grain crackers
Walking	3 meals 1 to 2 snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chopped foods, foods with more texture, finger foods (such as toasted O's cereal, small pieces of cooked pasta or soft vegetables, grated cheese)

A guide to feeding your baby solid foods

The following charts are a general guide to feeding your baby in the first 2 years. If your doctor or dietitian advises you to give your baby extra calories, add butter, margarine or cream to foods.

In the first year

Foods	From 6 to 9 months corrected	From 9 to 12 months corrected
Milk products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer plain yogurt (3.25% MF or higher), cottage cheese or grated hard cheese. • Aim for 1 to 2 tablespoons a day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with plain yogurt (3.25% MF or higher), cottage cheese or other cheese. • Aim for 2 to 4 tablespoons a day.
Grain Products and Iron-fortified infant cereal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix with breastmilk or formula. • Feed cereal from a spoon, not from the bottle. • Aim for 2 to 4 tablespoons a day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue iron-fortified infant cereal. • Introduce other plain cereals, bread, rice and pasta. • Aim for 4 to 10 tablespoons a day.
Meat and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooked meat, fish, chicken, tofu, mashed beans, egg yolk. • Canned light tuna-skipjack, yellowfin, and tongol. <i>Avoid albacore tuna as it is higher in mercury.</i> • Aim for 2 to 4 tablespoons a day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer minced or diced cooked meat, fish, chicken, tofu, beans, egg yolk. • Aim for 4 to 6 tablespoons a day.
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer pureed cooked vegetables and progress to soft mashed cooked vegetables. • Aim for 2 to 4 tablespoons a day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer mashed or diced cooked vegetables. • Aim for 4 to 8 tablespoons a day.
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer pureed cooked fruits, very ripe mashed fruit such as a banana. • Aim for 2 to 4 tablespoons a day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer SOFT fresh fruits, (peeled, seeded and diced) or canned fruits packed in water or juice (diced). • Aim for 4 to 8 tablespoons a day.

In the second year: 12 to 24 months

Use [Canada's Food Guide](#) to help you plan healthy eating for your child.

Milk and Alternates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose breastmilk, iron-fortified formula or homogenized milk, depending on your child's growth. For advice, talk with your family doctor or a dietitian. Progress from a bottle to a cup. Offer cheese, cheese spread and/or yogurt. Choose high fat cheese and yogurt. Aim for 2 servings of milk or dairy products a day. Some examples of a serving are 1 cup of milk, 2 oz of cheese or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup yogurt.
Grain Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer breads, dry unsweetened cereals, muffins, rice, pasta or crackers. Aim for 3 servings of grain products as day. Some examples of a serving are $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pasta or cereal or 1 slice of bread.
Meat and Alternates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer hummus, meat, fish, poultry, legumes and eggs. Aim for 1 to 2 servings a day. This is about 6 to 10 tablespoons.
Fruits and Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer mashed or diced fresh cooked fruits. Limit juice to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup a day. Aim for 2 servings a day. This is about 10 to 15 tablespoons.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer mashed or diced fresh cooked vegetables. Aim for 2 servings a day. This is about 10 to 15 tablespoons.
<p>Serve food that is easy for small hands to handle. If your baby needs extra calories add butter, margarine, oil or cream.</p>	

1 tablespoon	=	15 ml
1 ounce	=	30 ml or 30 g
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	=	125 ml
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	=	175 ml
1 cup	=	250 ml or 8 ounces

How do I make meal time safe and fun?

- Always stay with your baby while he or she is eating.
- Toddlers like to mash, feel, smell and squish food while eating. Stay calm and expect a mess during mealtime.
- Expect your toddler to sit at the table, in a high chair or booster seat, for about 15 to 20 minutes at breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Allow time for your child to finish eating but remove food when he or she has lost interest. Do not pressure your child to eat. If your child has not eaten for 20 minutes, take the food away.
- Explore new tastes and textures regularly. Toddlers may need to “try” new foods a dozen times before they accept and enjoy a food.
- Mealtimes also help your child learn and develop. Talking with your child at mealtimes helps them learn about foods and develop their language skills. Avoid TV and other distractions during meals.

Where can I get more information?

<p>Better Baby Food (2008) by Dana Kalnins and Joanne Saab Available online and in bookstores.</p> 	<p>Getting to Yum (2014) by Karen LeBillion Available online, in bookstores, and from the Hamilton Public Library.</p> 
---	---

Websites:

- Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php
- Dietitians of Canada: www.dietitians.ca
- Ellyn Satter: www.EllynSatterinstitute.org
- Eat Right Ontario www.eatrightontario.ca/en/default.aspx

