



FEEDING AND OTHER TRANSITIONS

Remember that from the time your baby is born they are beginning to form their own identity separate from their parent(s). This requires that they SEPARATE from their parent(s) in ways developmentally appropriate for them. Some of these are listed below: (for more detailed description of developmental milestones, see that monograph)

BIRTH

Your baby is now separated from their mother and has transitioned from being “all wet” to being “all dry” and from hearing and feeling their Mother constantly to being nurtured by others.

Sometimes skin rashes occur which go away by themselves - these are called erythema toxicum and milia.

Babies are also sensitive to the feelings of those who handle them. If that person is uncomfortable or stressed, they will pick up on it right away and cry or become fussy. Placing them “skin to skin” on the chest of Mother or Father frequently calms them.

1-3 MONTHS

Babies begin to “sleep through the night” (sleep 4-6 hours without waking), and parents cheer! And they participate in their environment more and more each day. Babies need only breast milk or formula until after four-six months of age. Early solid food introduction has been linked to development of food allergies and obesity. One way to know when your baby is ready for purees or cereal is that they revert back to waking every 2-3 hours 24 hours a day. This is different from “growth spurts” during which babies nurse almost continuously for 24-48 hours about every 2 weeks in order to “tell” their Mother’s breasts how much milk to produce to meet their needs.

4-6 MONTHS

At this time babies lose their “tongue thrust” reflex and, with a little teaching no longer push the spoon out of their mouth with their tongue.

Many babies who are formula fed are not satisfied by 32 ounces of formula and enjoy cereal (rice, barley, oatmeal first) and meat (or meat+vegetable or meat+fruit) plus 4-12 ounces of extra water so that they do not become constipated. Some prefer to take the water from a regular (not sippy) cup, some from a bottle. The pureed foods should be administered with a spoon (any spoon, teaspoon size or smaller is fine) not in the bottle (Nipple feeding solids has been linked to promoting obesity). Begin with 1/2 “jar” = 1-2 ounces (1/4 cup) and progress to 1 “jar” = 4-8 ounces (1/2-1 cup). Mealtimes should be fun and not stressful. If your baby is not ready, wait a week or so and try again. Wait 2-3 days between each new food to look for rashes, diarrhea, vomiting that could mean allergies to that food. If you have a concern that your baby is having an allergic reaction, please call us.

Pureed foods may be made at home by mixing water with the meat, vegetable, and fruit in an amount just enough to make a smooth puree. This can be blended in a blender. Cooked meat takes equal amounts of meat and water. However if you mix fruit or cooked vegetable in, less water will be required.

Some babies prefer a small milk feeding first, but most should be fed the pureed foods first,

with water from cup or bottle and then their milk feeding 30 minutes or more later.

Breast fed babies do not need solid foods until 6 months of age. At that time the above procedures can be followed.

6 MONTHS

At 6 months of age, babies like pureed meat or combinations with vegetable or fruit. They also like to be independent and the one thing they can do for themselves is to feed themselves "finger foods". Broccoli, cauliflower, green beans, squash, sliced carrots, sweet potato, potato, Cheerios (or similar cereal without sugar coating) melon, peeled apple, and banana are wonderful starters and have a side bonus of helping with teething. You will see many of the chunks in your infant's stool and this is ok! Your child will be so proud that they are feeding themselves and the dividend is that they are developing eye-hand coordination!

By this time, baby's needs for sucking have decreased and the pacifier is no longer needed even for those babies who had a strong sucking need for many months. Babies will sometimes throw the pacifier to see what the grown-ups want them to do. This is the time to throw it away!

9 MONTHS

By 9 months your child will be able to feed themselves items from the vegetable (2 servings), grain (2 servings), and fruit (2 servings) groups and is ready to start with meat/egg group items (2 servings) like hamburger, chicken off the bone, scrambled eggs ± cheese, etc. You may also introduce juice, but it is not a required part of the diet. Please never give more than 4 oz. of juice per day at any age since juice is very high in sugar! Some children are content with 3 meals per day and others require 5 or 6 smaller meals per day.

9-15 MONTHS

During this age, babies will wean themselves from the bottle to a cup if given the opportunity. This is another reinforcement of their independence! They will also wean to whole or 2% milk at one year of age. Substitute one 4 ounce cup for a bottle every day or so until the transition is made (usually within no more than a week). Sixteen ounces of milk or two servings from the milk group is the maximum needed after one year of age.

They will also transition to feeding themselves all of your foods. Foods such as shellfish (shrimp, etc), peanut butter, egg, and citrus fruits are best if given after nine months of age due to their potential for allergies. Honey is also not recommended until after one year.

Please be sure that your child is always sitting whenever they place anything in their mouth in order to avoid death or brain damage from choking.

12-24 MONTHS

Breastfeeding can continue as long into the second year as you wish, but most infants transition to a cup between 9-12 months of age.

By this time, your child will be eating 3-6 meals a day like an adult, depending upon whether they prefer 3 large or more small meals. Nuts should be delayed until after 2 years of age. If there is a strong family history of allergies you may want to avoid foods such as eggs, shellfish, and peanut butter until two years of age.