

# RAISING ADVENTUROUS EATERS with first foods

Now your baby is ready to be a true food explorer! This is the time to introduce many new flavors and textures. With practice, babies will accept these new foods and will ask for more. Simple modifications to family meals is a great way for your baby to build new skills and become an adventurous eater.



## What Foods Do I Offer?

- Introduce small amounts of a wide variety of fruits, veggies, proteins, and grains in a rainbow of colors. Fruits and veggies have a low risk of allergic reactions and don't have to be introduced one at a time.
- For detailed information on introducing common high-allergen foods (dairy, egg, peanut, tree nut, soy, wheat, fish, shellfish, sesame), talk to your pediatrician and see the section on "Safe Eating Tips"
- Offer plenty of iron-rich foods like meats, legumes, green veggies, and iron fortified cereals.
- Spices like cinnamon, pepper, curry, garlic powder, and fresh or dried herbs like basil and parsley are a great way to introduce more flavors.
- Continue offering foods many times in rotation. It may take babies 8-10 tries over multiple days or weeks to embrace the flavors of some foods like veggies.
- When using store-bought baby foods, select products with over 50% veggies or single-vegetable purees to help train babies' taste buds. Fruit and veggie blends may hide the flavor of veggies.



## How Much Do I Offer?

- From 6-9 months, offer 3 meals per day at family mealtimes starting at 2-3 tablespoons of pureed (smoothly blended) or soft foods and gradually reaching about ½ a cup. Remember you are feeding responsively, so it's ok if your baby doesn't eat the full amount. Babies decide how much they'd like to eat and when they are full.
- At this age, it is important that babies have enough hunger for the important calories, fat, protein, and other nutrients from breast milk and/or formula. Consider offering solid foods after or between breast milk or formula feedings.
- Respect your baby's hunger cues. When they turn their face, close their mouth when food approaches, and/or lose interest, they are likely done eating.

### LOOK FOR THIS ICON

Products approved to use PHA's icon contain over 50% veggies and no additives.

**PHA**  **Veggies Early & Often**  
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### How Do I Offer Foods?

- Always supervise your baby during mealtime. Sometimes babies will gag when they sense a new texture in their mouth. If they are frequently gagging, try a smoother texture. With more practice and exposure, gagging often decreases.
- Put food in front of your baby on their tray or table to let them explore with their hands. This exploration, although messy, is an important step to encourage your baby to try new foods. It also supports brain and fine motor development.
- Adapt family meals by blending, fork mashing, or finely dicing soft foods. Strips of soft, “squishable” foods about the width of your pinky finger are perfect at this age too.



### What About Drinks?

- Breast milk and/or iron-fortified formula feedings are still the main way that babies get nutrition and hydration.
- Offer a few small sips of water in a small open cup or straw cup so babies get used to the taste of plain water. Offer no more than 4 ounces of water per day.
- Babies under 12 months should not be offered juice or other beverages.

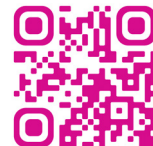


## Boosting Feeding Development

- 1. ORAL MOTOR SKILLS:** Develop baby’s control and coordination for safe swallowing by providing a variety of purees they can eat from a spoon. Small, squishable pieces of finger foods can help them learn to bite and chew. As your baby tries new foods, you’ll often see them push the food out with the tip of their tongue. This natural “tongue thrust reflex” will slowly begin to go away in the next few months.
- 2. GROSS MOTOR SKILLS:** Position babies for feeding with support for the torso (chest, belly, and back). Once their knees bend over the edge of the high chair seat, they need a footrest for support.
- 3. FINE MOTOR SKILLS:** Providing soft pieces of food can help babies start to “rake” foods with their hands and hold larger strips in their fists. By 9-12 months, the raking grasp will turn into a pincer grasp where they precisely grab and release foods with their fingers.
- 4. COGNITIVE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS:** Share conversations with your baby during mealtimes by asking questions and talking about the food you are eating together.
- 5. TASTE TRAINING:** Introduce the same food in different ways with different textures. Try boiling, blanching, steaming, roasting and adding different spices to veggies to make them more fun and interesting. Remember, it may take many exposures to a new food before your baby may appear to like it.

**REMEMBER** to share this information with anyone in your household or support system who will also be responsible for feeding your child.

**FOR MORE EASY WAYS TO MODIFY FAMILY MEALS FOR YOUR NEWEST EATER, SCAN HERE.**



The information contained in this guide should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

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