

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introducing your baby to family foods six months to One year

This booklet has been adapted with permission by the Best Start Resource Centre and the Nutrition Resource Centre.

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BABY'S FIRST FOOD

If you get your water from a well...

Your well should be checked every six months for bacteria. It should be checked every two years for chemical content.

Do not use well water to mix your baby's formula unless it has been checked.

To find out what tests you need and how to do them, contact Nova Scotia Department of Environment: 1-877-9ENVIRO (1-877-936-8476).

For the first six months of life breast milk is the only food that your baby needs to grow and be healthy. Breastfeeding is the normal way to feed babies.

If you give your baby any other food—including infant formula—you will make less breast milk. If you stop breastfeeding, it can be hard to start again. Your baby will not get all the benefits of breastfeeding.

- Breastfeeding is healthy, natural, convenient, and free. It is a good way to bond with your baby.
- Breast milk protects your baby from colds, infections, and allergies. Infant formula does not protect babies in the same way.
- Mothers who breastfeed have less risk of breast cancer and ovarian cancer.

Breastfed babies continue to need a supplement of 10 micrograms (400IU) of vitamin D each day until they are one year old and eating foods that have vitamin D. In Canada, the sun is not strong enough throughout the year for mothers and babies to make the vitamin D they need through their skin. Also, babies who are less than one year old need to stay out of direct sunlight.

Continue to breastfeed until your baby is two years old or more. The longer you breastfeed, the more benefits you and your baby get. If you are thinking about using infant formula, get all the facts first. Breast milk protects your baby's health in ways that infant formula does not.

If you have decided not to breastfeed, use infant formula.

Talk to a health care provider about infant formula and your baby's health. Ask for information on how to:

- reduce infections
- prepare infant formula safely





HELP YOUR BABY BE A HEALTHY EATER

- Bring your baby to the table to join in at family mealtimes. Babies learn by watching others. Keep mealtimes pleasant.
- It is best if there are no toys or television to distract your baby.
- Talk to your baby quietly and encourage him while he is eating. Do not pressure your baby to eat. This can make him refuse food even more and may lead to feeding problems.
- Always stay with your baby when he eats.
- Let your baby explore his food with his hands. Let your baby feed himself with his fingers or a spoon when he is able.
- Let your baby decide how much to eat. Never pressure your baby to eat more than he wants. Do not restrict the amount you give him to eat when he seems hungry.
- It is normal for babies to eat different amounts of food each day. It is alright if your baby refuses a meal or two.
- Be patient with new foods. You may need to try new foods many times on different days.
- Do not use games to get your baby to eat.
- Never force food into your baby's mouth.
- Never use food as a reward or a punishment.

You and your baby's responsibilities:

- You are responsible for what your baby is given to eat. You also decide where and when to feed your baby.
- Your baby is responsible for how much and even whether he eats.

If you have questions or concerns about your baby's eating, talk to your health care provider.





Note: This guide uses the words "breastfeeding" and "breast milk" to talk about milk feedings for your baby. You can use this information on introducing new foods to your baby if you are not breastfeeding.



Healthy babies come in all weights, shapes, and sizes. Try not to compare your baby to other babies.

WHEN TO START SOLID FOODS: SIX MONTHS

When your baby is six months old he is ready for solid foods. Your baby does not need teeth to start eating solid food.

Starting solid foods too early or too late can cause problems.

IF YOU:	YOUR BABY MAY:		
Start your baby on	Breastfeed less often causing you to make less breast milk		
solid foods too early	Stop breastfeeding too early		
	Not get all the benefits of breast milk such as protection from illness and allergies		
	Have lower iron levels		
	Have a diet low in protein, fat, and other important nutrients		
Start your baby on	Be slow to accept solid food		
solid foods too late	Have a hard time chewing food		
	Not get all the vitamins and minerals he needs, such as iron and vitamin A		

Growth Spurts

Growth spurts are common at about:

- three weeks
- six weeks
- three months

Your baby may want extra breast milk at these times.

- This is not a sign that your baby needs solid foods.
- It is too early to introduce solids.
- Starting solids does not help your baby sleep through the night.

Breastfeed more often when your baby seems hungry during a growth spurt.



At six months it is important to offer iron-rich foods such as:

- iron-fortified infant cereals;
- beef;
- chicken;
- turkey;
- · lamb:
- · fish;
- pork;
- · egg yolk;
- · tofu; and
- well-cooked legumes such as beans, lentils, and chickpeas.

HOW TO TELL IF YOUR BABY IS READY FOR SOLID FOODS

Since birth, your baby has been growing on breast milk. At six months old, breast milk is still the most important food but the time has come to add solid foods. Extra iron is needed at six months. Solid foods provide a variety of nutrients, flavours, and textures for your baby.

Your baby is ready to start eating solids when she:

- is six months old:
- holds her head up;
- sits up in a high chair;
- opens her mouth wide when you offer food on a spoon;
- turns her face away if she doesn't want the food;
- closes her lips over the spoon; and
- keeps food in her mouth and swallows it instead of pushing it out.

Make sure your baby shows all of these signs of readiness before you start solid foods.

- At first your baby may not accept new foods. If she shows you that she does not like the food by closing her mouth or turning her head away, stop feeding her that food. Try it again another day. Keep feeding time pleasant. If your baby feels pressured to eat, she may not want to try other new foods.
- Each baby is different. Try not to compare your baby to other babies. Follow your baby's signs of readiness for food. Talk to your health care provider to help you decide if your baby is ready.





HOW TO START SOLID FOOD

• Give solid food after your baby has had breast milk. Continue to breastfeed throughout the day as your baby needs it.

- Start a new food when your baby is happy and hungry. Start new foods in the morning or at lunchtime. Include him at family mealtimes.
- Sit your baby up straight. It is safest to sit your baby in a high chair. Do up the seat belt to help keep your baby safe. Never leave your baby alone.
- Keep mealtimes pleasant. Never force your baby to eat.

How should I start my baby on a new food?

- Put a small amount of food on the tip of a small spoon. Hold the spoon so your baby can see it. Then put some food on his lips. Put food in his mouth only if he opens it.
- If your baby does not swallow the food, he may not be ready for solid food yet. Wait a few days and try again.
- If your baby does not like a new food at first, try it again another day. He may need to try a new food many times before he likes it.
- Gradually give your baby more food. Let your baby guide you. Your baby will tell you he has had enough to eat when he turns his head away or keeps his mouth shut.

How do I protect my baby from allergies?

- Continue to breastfeed. Breastmilk helps protect your baby from allergies.
- Start with single foods, not mixed. If your baby shows signs of allergy, this makes it easier to know which food is causing the problem.
- Give the same food for three to five days before you try a new food. Signs of food allergy may take up to five days to appear.
- Signs of allergy are rash, vomiting, diarrhea, or breathing problems. Stop feeding the food if you think it causes any of these symptoms. Talk to your doctor. Call 911 if your baby is having trouble breathing.

It is safest to sit your baby in a high chair. Do up the seat belt to help keep your baby safe.

Never leave your baby alone.





SIX TO NINE MONTHS: WHAT TO FEED YOUR BABY

Your baby needs iron for good health. Continue to:

- breastfeed
- provide the extra iron that your baby needs by offering her the iron-rich foods listed in the section called "How to tell if your baby is ready for solid foods" on page 9

Feed your baby at regular times. Include her at family mealtimes. Talk to her gently.

Start your baby on puréed foods. Next, move to lumpy, mashed foods. As your baby becomes better at eating, give her finely chopped foods. Changing texture is important to help your baby learn to chew. Babies who stay on puréed foods too long may be less willing to eat textured foods.

What types of infant cereal should I feed my baby?

- Start with an iron-fortified, single grain infant cereal, such as rice. Gradually try other single grain cereals, such as oats, barley, and wheat.
- Use mixed grain cereals only after your baby has tried each of the single grain cereals.
- Choose plain infant cereals. Cereals with added fruits have extra sugar.
- Choose cereals without infant formula added. Read the labels.
- Mix the dry cereal with breast milk. At first make the cereal thin. As your baby becomes better at eating, add less breast milk to make the cereal thicker.
- Do not give adult cereals.
- Always feed cereal from a spoon. Never add cereal to a bottle.



SIX TO NINE MONTHS

What kinds of meats and alternatives should I feed my baby?

- Keep meats and alternatives moist so they are easy to swallow. Add extra water or broth to meats and cooked beans. Use silken (soft) tofu.
- Do not give your baby deli meats such as ham, wieners, bologna, salami, or sausages. These are high in fat and salt.
- Give your baby fish such as white fish, salmon canned light tuna.

Canned **albacore** tuna may be high in mercury. Your baby should have no more than 40g (1.5 ounces) **a week** of this kind of fish.

Some other types of fish can also have high levels of mercury. These are: swordfish, shark, fresh or frozen tuna, marlin, orange roughy, and escolar. Your baby should eat no more than 40 g (1.5 ounces) a month of these fish.

After your baby has started eating iron-rich foods, she needs other foods like vegetables and fruit.

See the section called "Adding other new foods from six to nine months" on page 16.





ADDING OTHER NEW FOODS FROM SIX TO NINE MONTHS

What kinds of vegetables and fruit should I give my baby?

- Try one new vegetable or fruit at a time.
- Start with mild tasting foods such as squash, peas, sweet potatoes, green or yellow beans, apples, peaches, pears, apricots, plums, avocados, and bananas. You can also give other vegetables and fruit that your family eats.
- Wash and peel fresh vegetables and fruit before using.
- Give your baby cooked and mashed vegetables and fruit. You can mash bananas, papayas, avocados, mangoes, melon, and canned fruits without cooking them. As your baby gets older he can have soft pieces of food.
- Use fresh fruit or canned fruit in juice. If you use baby food fruit avoid "fruit desserts". They are high in sugar.
- When you buy baby food, buy meat and vegetables in separate jars. Baby foods that combine vegetables and meat in the same jar are less nourishing. If you use them, add extra meat or alternatives and vegetables to your baby's meal.

When choosing foods from the four food groups, think about buying foods produced here in Nova Scotia or the Maritimes. Nutritious local foods are good for your baby, your family, and your community.

Local foods don't travel far to market. This means that they are often fresher and that they pollute less.

When you buy local foods, you support local farmers and fishers. More of your money stays in your community.

Try shopping at your local farmers' market. When you go to the grocery store, ask if local foods are available.



If you get your water from a well...

Be sure to have it tested before your baby drinks it.

Your well should be checked every six months for bacteria. It should be checked every two years for chemical content.

To find out what tests you need and how to do them, contact Nova Scotia Environment and Labour: 1-877-9ENVIRO (1-877-936-8476).

What about juice and other drinks?

- Your baby gets enough to drink from breast milk. He does not need juice. You can give your baby tap water or bottled water from a cup if he seems thirsty. Do not give distilled, carbonated, or mineral water.
- If you decide to give juice:
- Wait until your baby is eating fruit and other foods.
- Serve juice in a cup, with a sit-down meal or snack.
- Give your baby 100% pure fruit juices with no added sugar. You do not need to buy special baby juice. Just be sure the juice is pasteurized.
- Give your baby no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) of fruit juice per day. You do not need to add water to the juice.
- Do not give your baby fruit drinks, fruit punch or cocktail, soft drinks, sports drinks, or herbal teas.



NINE MONTHS TO ONE YEAR

WHAT TO FEED YOUR BABY

- As your baby gets older, increase the variety of foods and textures that you offer.
- When your baby is eating a variety of solid foods, give breastmilk after solid foods at mealtime.
- Many women continue to breastfeed when they return to work or school.
 To help you with this transition, talk to your health care provider.



At about nine months, your baby can pick things up with her thumb and forefinger. Now is the time to offer small pieces of table foods or "finger foods" for snacks and with meals.

- Let your baby feed herself with her hands or with a plastic-coated baby spoon.
 Make sure her hands are clean before eating.
- Expect a mess! Making a mess is just part of learning how to eat.



ADDING NEW FOODS FROM NINE MONTHS TO ONE YEAR

FOOD GROUP	TIPS
Vegetables and fruit	Offer soft, cooked vegetables cut in bite-sized pieces.
	Give pieces of soft, ripe fruit like bananas, peaches, kiwi, and cantaloupe.
Grain products	Continue to give your baby infant cereal. It is a good source of iron. If your baby refuses to eat it, mix it with fruit or other healthy foods.
	Offer whole grain finger foods such as pieces of bagel, dry toast strips, rice, roti, noodles, cooked pasta, flat bread, and unsalted crackers.
Meat and alternatives	Give bite-size pieces of tender meat, fish, cooked beans, and tofu. Give peanut butter or other nut butters on whole grain bread or crackers.
	If your baby refuses meat, try mixing fish, beans or tofu in sweet potatoes or squash to enhance flavour and texture. Be sure your baby has tried each new food on its own first.
	Give cooked egg yolk. Your baby can try cooked egg whites after one year of age.
Milk and alternatives	Breast milk is still the most important food. Continue to breastfeed your baby for two years or longer.
	In addition to breast milk, when your baby is eating a variety of foods every day, you can offer your baby homogenized cow's milk (3.25% milk fat). She should be between nine months and one year old. Give milk in a cup.
	Do not give skim, 1%, 2% milk, or low-fat milk products. Babies need the fat to grow.
	Do not give soy, rice or other vegetarian beverages. They do not have enough fat and may not have vitamin D added to them.
	Never give unpasteurized milk or milk products.
	Offer plain yogurt, and small cubes of soft cheese or shredded cheese.
By one year old, your	baby should be eating a variety of foods from each food group and drinking

By one year old, your baby should be eating a variety of foods from each food group and drinking liquids from a cup. Babies can go directly from breastfeeding to drinking from a cup.





MAKING HOMEMADE BABY FOOD

It is easy to make your own baby food. You can use the same healthy foods that you feed your family. Homemade baby food is healthy for your baby. It also:

- saves you money
- lets your baby try a greater variety of foods
- helps your baby get used to different textures and tastes
- lets your baby eat the same foods as your family

How do I make my own baby food?

To make baby food, you can use any one of the following:

• a food blender • a baby food mill (grinder) • a wire sieve and a clean spoon • a potato masher • a fork Wash your hands before you prepare food. Use clean utensils and cookware. Plain foods help baby learn about flavours. You don't need to add sugar, salt, margarine, or butter.

The following table outlines how to prepare different types of foods:

FOODS	HOW TO PREPARE
Vegetables and fruit	Wash, peel, pit, and/or seed and slice fresh vegetables or fruit or use frozen. Place vegetables or fruit in a small amount of boiling water. Cook until tender. Drain and keep the cooking water. Mash or blend vegetables or fruit using a small amount of cooking water. You can blend or mash ripe, soft fruits like bananas, mangoes, avocados, and canned fruit without cooking them.
Meat and fish	Place a piece of meat or fish in a saucepan with a small amount of water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer. Continue to cook until meat separates easily from the bones or the fish flakes easily with a fork. You can also roast, bake, or braise meats and fish. Remove the bones and skin and trim off the fat. Cut meat or flake fish into small pieces. Blend with cooking water or stock.
Meat alternatives	Cook legumes, such as beans, lentils, and chickpeas, according to package directions. Rinse canned beans well. Cook egg yolk. Use plain tofu. Blend with a little water or mash with a fork.

Your baby will not need puréed or blended foods for long. At seven months offer mashed foods. Next, offer soft pieces of food.



SAFETY AND ALLERGIES

Do not feed your baby directly from the jar or container of baby food unless you're giving your baby the whole amount.



How do I keep baby's food safe?

- You must serve freshly made baby food or an opened jar of store-bought baby food right away. You can also store it in a covered container in the fridge for two or three days.
- You can store baby food in a fridge freezer for two months or a deep freezer for six months. Once baby food has been thawed, don't refreeze it.
- Make sure the safety seal on the jar of storebought baby food is not broken. Listen for a popping sound when you open a jar of baby food.
- Check the "best before" date on store-bought baby food.

Do not feed your baby directly from the jar or container of baby food unless you're giving your baby the whole amount. Put the food for your baby into a bowl. Throw out any food that has come in contact with your baby's saliva.

How do I keep my baby safe?

 Babies can choke easily. Always stay with your baby while she is eating. Stop feeding if your baby is crying or laughing. Do not feed your baby in a moving car.

- Do not give your baby foods that are hard, small, and round like nuts, popcorn, whole grapes, or hard vegetables.
- Do not give your baby smooth and sticky foods, such as peanut butter on its own.
- Do not give your baby honey or any food made with honey for the first year. It can cause botulism (food poisoning).
- Swordfish, shark, fresh or frozen tuna steak, marlin, orange roughy, and escolar are often high in mercury. Do not give your baby these fish (up to 40 grams) more than **once a month**. Canned albacore tuna can be given in servings up to 40 grams **once per week**.

What should I know about allergies?

- Your baby is more likely to have an allergy if one or both parents or brothers or sisters have allergies, asthma or eczema. If there is a family history of allergies, speak to your health care provider. You may need to wait to start some foods until your baby is older.
- If there is no history of food allergies, there is no reason to delay introducing foods except for egg whites. Wait until your baby is one year old before giving egg whites.
- Watch for allergic reactions when you offer new foods. Follow the steps in the section called "How to start solid food" on page 11 of this booklet.



SAMPLE MENUS FOR BABY

SAMPLE MENUS FOR BABY

- Continue to breastfeed your baby on demand. When your baby is eating a variety of solid foods, give breast milk after solid foods at mealtimes.
- These menus are only a guide. Your baby may eat foods at different times.
- Every baby is different. Trust that your baby knows how much to eat. Healthy babies come in all shapes and sizes. Try not to compare your baby to other babies.

TIME OF DAY	6 MONTHS	6-9 MONTHS	9-12 MONTHS
Early morning	Breast milk	Breast milk	Breast milk
Morning	Breast milk	Breast milk	Breast milk
	Iron-fortified infant cereal mixed with breast milk or water	Iron-fortified infant cereal mixed with breast milk or water	Iron-fortified infant cereal mixed with breast milk or water
		Mashed fruit	Soft fruit
Snack	None	Small pieces of whole grain toast,	Unsweetened dry cereal
		bread, crackers, roti, or pita	Breast milk or homogenized milk from a cup
Noon	Breast milk	Breast milk Mashed vegetables	Iron-fortified infant cereal mixed with breast milk or water
		Plain mashed or finely chopped	Chopped meat or meat alternatives*
		meat or meat alternatives* Mashed fruit	Cooked pasta or cooked rice, chopped vegetables
			Soft fruit
			Breast milk or homogenized milk from a cup
Snack	None	None	Whole grain muffin
			Cubes of soft cheese
Evening	Breast milk	Breast milk	Chopped meat or meat alternatives*
	Iron-fortified infant cereal mixed with breast milk or water Plain pureed meat or meat alternatives	Iron-fortified infant cereal mixed with breast milk or water	Cooked pasta or cooked rice, chopped vegetables
		Plain mashed or finely chopped	Soft fruit and/or plain yogurt
		meat or meat alternatives*	Breast milk
		Mashed vegetables or fruit	
Snack	Breast milk	Breast milk	Breast milk
		Small pieces of whole grain toast, bread, crackers, roti, or pita	Small pieces of whole grain toast, bread, crackers, roti, or pita

^{*} Meat alternatives include fish, cooked legumes, beans and lentils, tofu, egg yolk, and peanut butter.



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Ouestions?

If you have any questions about feeding your baby, contact your local public health services office.



RESOURCES

Some recommended books and websites

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

Child of Mine, Feeding with Love and Good Sense (2000)

E. Satter. Bull Publishing Co. Ltd.

Ellyn Satter Associates

Website: www.ellynsatter.com

Raising Happy, Healthy, Weight Wise Kids (2000)

J. Toews and N. Parton. Key Porter Books

Mieux Vivre Avec Notre Enfant de la Naissance à Deux Ans Institut National de Santé (2006) Publique du Québec (for French version only)

REFERENCES

The Optimal Duration of Exclusive Breastfeeding: A Systemic Review (2001) Kramer and Kakuma. World Health Organization

The Baby Friendly™ Initiative in Community Health Services: A Canadian Implementation Guide (2002) The Breastfeeding Committee of Canada Website: www.breastfeedingcanada.ca

Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants - Statement of the Joint Working Group: Canadian Pediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada and Health Canada (2005) Health Canada Website: www.hc-sc.gc.ca

A Practical Workbook to Protect, Promote and Support Breastfeeding in Community Based Projects (2002) Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program. Health Canada Website: www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Public Health Services Local Contact Information

Public Health Services can provide information and support for you and your new baby including free copies of:

- Breastfeeding Basics
- After year One: Food for Children
- Healthy Teeth for Babies, Toddlers and Preschoolers

Amherst

18 South Albion Street Phone: 667-3319

Annapolis Royal

Annapolis Community Health Centre St. George Street Phone: 532-0490

Antigonish

St Martha's Hospital 23 Bay Street Phone: 863-2743

Arichat

Public Health Services 14 Bay Street Phone: 226-2944

Baddeck

Victoria County Memorial Hospital 30 Old Margaree Road Phone: 295-2178

Barrington Passage

Causeway Shopping Plaza Phone: 637-2430

Berwick

Western Kings Memorial Health Centre 121 Orchard Street Phone: 538-3700

Bridgewater

215 Dominion Street Suite 109

Phone: 543-0850

Canso

Eastern Memorial Hospital 1746 Union St Phone: 366-2925

Cheticamp

Sacred Heart Community Health Centre 15102 Cabot Trail Phone: 224-2410

Dartmouth

7 Mellor Ave, Unit 5 Burnside Phone: 481-5800

Digby

Digby General Hospital 67 Warwick St. 3rd Floor Phone: 245-2557

Elmsdale

15 Commerce Court Suite 150 Phone: 883-3500

Glace Bay

Senator's Place 633 Main Street 2nd Floor Phone: 842-4050

Guysborough

Guysborough Hospital 10506 Highway 16 Phone: 533-3502

Halifax Regional Municipality

7 Mellor Ave, Unit 5 Burnside Phone: 481-5800

Head of Jeddore

Forest Hills Shopping Centre Phone: 889-2143

Inverness

26 Upper Railway St. Phone: 258-1920

Liverpool

175 School Street Phone: 354-5737

Lunenburg

Fisherman' Memorial Hospital 14 High Street Phone: 634-4014

Meteghan

Clare Medical Centre 8559 Highway #1 Phone: 645-2325

Middle Musquodoboit

Musquodoboit Valley Memorial Hospital 492 Archibald Brook Road Phone: 384-2370

Middleton

Soldier's Memorial Hospital 462 Main Street Phone: 825-3385

Neil's Harbour

Buchanan Memorial Community Health Centre PO Box 46 Phone: 336-2295

New Germany

5246, Highway 10 Phone: 644-2710

New Glasgow

825 East River Road 2nd Floor Phone: 752-5151

New Waterford

New Waterford Consolidated Hospital 716 King Street Phone: 862-2204

Port Hawkesbury

708 Reeves Street Unit 3 Phone: 625-1693

Sheet Harbour

Eastern Shore Memorial Hospital Phone: 885-2470

Shelburne

Roseway Hospital 1606 Lake Rd. Phone: 875-2623

Sherbrooke

St. Mary's Hospital 91 Hospital Road Phone: 522-2212

St. Peter's

Phone: 1-888-272-0096 (Office closed, please call above number)

Sydney

235 Townsend Street 2nd Floor Phone: 563-2400

Sydney Mines

7 Fraser Avenue Phone: 736-6245

Truro

Colchester Regional Hospital Annex 201 Willow Street 3rd Floor

Phone: 893-5820

Windsor Phone: 798-2264

Wolfville

Eastern Kings Memorial Community Health Centre 23 Earnscliffe Avenue Phone: 542-6310

Yarmouth

Yarmouth Regional Hospital 60 Vancouver Street 4th Floor Building B Phone: 742-7141



Ontario's maternal, newborn and earl child development resource centre

Centre de ressources sur la maternité, les nouveau-nés et le développement des jeunes enfants de l'Ontario



Best Start: Ontario's Maternal Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre (www.beststart.org) is a key program of the Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse (www.opc.on.ca).

Nutrition Resource Centre (www.nutritionrc.ca) is a key program of the Ontario Public Health Association (www.opha.on.ca)

