



Encouraging Healthy Eating Habits

How can I help my baby develop healthy eating habits?

- Don't overfeed your baby (pay attention to signs your baby is full).
- Don't allow power struggles over food to develop. Your baby will eat if they are hungry.
- Provide a well-balanced diet.
- Don't use food as bribes.
- Feed your baby in a highchair or at the table, with a spoon.

Why is my baby so picky when it comes to eating?

Lots of babies need some time to get used to the different textures, colors and tastes of food; food is still very new. In fact, just as babies crave routine and consistency in their schedules, many also like that same familiarity when it comes to their food. Research suggests that some babies need to try a food 15 times before they finally accept a food into their diet.

During this period, take the opportunity to introduce lots of new foods and tastes into your baby's diet. Soon, babies may be more likely to reject new foods to prove their independence.

Of course, many babies are genuinely picky eaters, and if this seems to be the case for your baby, you can use these tips for introducing new foods:

- Be calm and relaxed when you offer new foods, even when they are refused!
- Don't make a big deal out of new food choices.
- Only offer one new food choice at each meal.
- Offer new food items when you know your baby is hungry.
- Look for ways to boost the nutritional value of foods your baby likes (for example, add some peas to his macaroni and cheese or fruit to his yogurt).
- Try to make meals relaxed.

How can I be sure my baby is being well-nourished even though he is picky?

Lots of parents worry that their babies aren't getting enough vitamins, now that they are finished with formula or breastmilk. Even if your baby seems to be eating nothing but cheese and bread, don't worry. Usually, once parents record what their babies actually do eat over the course of a week, (not a day), they are surprised to find that their baby benefits from all of the major food groups and is getting the nutrients they need.

**If you are still concerned and really don't think your baby is getting enough vitamins through food, please do check with your pediatrician. Pediatricians routinely check for iron deficiency at 9-12 months and again at 2-5 years.

What should I do if my baby is constipated?

First of all, make sure your baby is getting enough water throughout the day. Always have a sippy cup of water available. You can also offer your baby diluted prune juice and other fiber-rich foods such as whole-grain breads, broccoli and prunes. Your baby should be getting about 6 grams of fiber a day. Also, until your baby's constipation has passed, avoid binding foods like bananas, apples, cheese and rice cereal.

What food should I avoid in general?

- Cow's milk is not recommended before age 1 year. Many babies still need the fat and calories of whole milk for growth and development. Discuss with your pediatrician when to transition to low-fat/toddler milk.
- **Choking hazard food bites:** You should still be careful to give your baby food bites that aren't choking hazards. Hard vegetables like carrots and celery should be sliced long and thin, shredded or cut up into pea-size bites. Fruits like grapes and cherry tomatoes should be cut into quarters before serving.
- **Small, hard foods:** Nuts, popcorn, hard candies, raisins and other small dried fruit and seeds.

What vitamins does my baby need to get from food, and what are good sources?

Calcium

Calcium is key for building strong bones and teeth, promoting nerve and muscle function and helping blood clot.

Good sources of calcium for your baby are:

- 1/2 cup yogurt: 190 mg
- 1/2 cup calcium-fortified orange juice: 175 mg.
- 1/2 ounce cheddar cheese: 153 mg.
- 1/2 cup milk: about 150 mg.
- 1/2 cup fortified soy milk: 150 mg.
- 1/4 cup whole-milk ricotta cheese: 128 mg.
- 1/2 ounce jack cheese: 106 mg.
- 1/2 ounce Swiss cheese: 102 mg.

- 1/4 cup white beans: 80 mg.
- 1/4 cup cottage cheese: 68 mg.
- 1/2 ounce mozzarella: 75 mg.
- 1/2 slice cheese pizza: 59 mg.
- 1/2 cup calcium-fortified apple juice: 50 mg.
- 1/4 cup spinach, cooked: 73 mg.
- 1/4 cup cooked macaroni and cheese (from a packaged mix): 50 mg.
- 1/2 orange: 25 mg.
- 1/4 sweet potato, mashed: 17 mg.
- 1/4 cup broccoli: 15 mg.

Iron

Iron is important for making hemoglobin and myoglobin. Lack of iron can cause anemia, which can result in fatigue, weakness, and irritability. Iron also affects brain development.

Some of the best sources of iron for your baby:

- 1/3 cup fortified, ready-to-eat cereal: 4.5 mg.
- 1/3 cup fortified oatmeal: 4 mg.
- 1/4 cup soybeans: 2.2 mg.
- 1/4 cup navy beans: 1.2 mg.
- 1 ounce steak: 1 mg.
- 1 ounce shrimp: .9 mg.
- 1/4 cup garbanzo beans: .8 mg.
- 1/2 medium-sized hamburger (1.5 oz.): .9 mg.
- 1/4 cup black beans: .9 mg.
- 1 tablespoon wheat germ: .5 mg. iron
- 1/4 cup tofu: .9 mg.
- 1/2 large egg: .3 mg.
- 1 ounce breast of chicken: .2 mg.

Zinc

Zinc aids digestion and metabolism.

Some of the best sources of zinc for your baby:

- 1/2 medium-sized hamburger: about 2 mg.
- 1 ounce steak: about 1.7 mg.
- 1 tablespoon wheat germ: about 1 mg.
- 1/4 cup whole-milk ricotta cheese: .7 mg.
- 1/3 cup bran flakes: between .8 mg. and 1.4 mg., depending on the brand
- 1/4 cup tofu: .6 mg. 1/4 cup lentils: about .6 mg.
- 1/4 cup lima beans: .4 mg.
- 1/4 cup corn: .2 mg.

- 1 large egg yolk or 1/2 whole large egg: .3 mg.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps the body absorb minerals like calcium and builds strong teeth and bones. It's called the "sunshine vitamin" because the body can make it when the skin is exposed to sunlight.

Some of the best sources of vitamin D for your baby:

- 1 ounce salmon serving: 103 ius
- 1/2 cup fortified whole milk: 49 ius
- 1 large egg yolk: 25 ius
- 1/3 cup fortified, ready-to-eat cereal: 13 ius

Vitamin A

Vitamin A plays an important role in vision and bone growth, and helps protect the body from infections. Vitamin A also promotes the health and growth of cells and tissues in the body, particularly those in the hair, nails and skin.

Some of the best sources of vitamin A for your baby:

- 1/4 cup mashed sweet potato: 646 mcg.
- 1/4 cup cooked carrots: 336 mcg.
- 1/4 cup butternut squash (cubed): about 286 mcg.
- 1/2 cup fortified milk: 72.5 mcg.
- 1/2 large egg: 35 mcg.
- 1/4 cup cooked broccoli: 26 mcg.
- 1/4 cup sliced mango: 16 mcg.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C helps form and repair red blood cells, bones, and tissues. It helps keep your child's gums healthy and strengthens his blood vessels, minimizing bruising from falls and scrapes. Vitamin C helps heal cuts and wounds, boosts the immune system, and keeps infections at bay.

Some of the best sources of Vitamin C for your baby:

- 1/4 cup guava: 82.5 mg.
- 1/4 cup papaya: 47.5 mg.
- 1/2 medium orange: 30 mg.
- 1/4 cup broccoli: 30 mg.
- 1/4 cup orange juice: 25 mg.