

# Help me **be healthy**



## 6 to 12 months

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I weigh \_\_\_\_\_ pounds. I am \_\_\_\_\_ inches long.

A special note for me: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# I am your baby. I grow best with love and the right food!

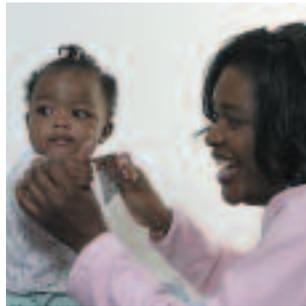
## I need breast milk or formula.

Feed me breast milk or baby formula with iron until I turn one. You can still breastfeed me after one year if we want.

I know when I get hungry or full. I let you know by the way I act. Please feed me when I act hungry. Let me eat until I act full.

I might drink breast milk or formula 4 or more times a day. My tummy can hold about 6 to 8 ounces at a time.

- ♥ Hold me when you feed me. I feel safe in your arms.
- ♥ Sometimes I stop eating to talk with you or look around. I am not full yet. Please talk to me. I love our time together.



## With your help I will learn to eat other foods.

After 6 months, I can start to eat other foods. Please go slowly. If our family has allergies or I was born early, talk to the doctor and WIC before you start other foods.

**Be sure that I am ready.** To eat other foods, I must be able to:

- ♥ Sit and hold my head steady.
- ♥ Show I want food by opening my mouth.
- ♥ Show I don't want food by closing my mouth or turning my head.



**Choose healthy foods.** I need them to grow right. Let me learn to eat foods like:

Baby cereal- rice, oatmeal, barley

Vegetables- squash, peas, carrots, green beans

Fruit- applesauce, peaches, bananas, pears

Meats- beef, chicken, turkey

Keep my foods plain. Do not add sugar, salt, spices, butter, fat, or gravy. If you buy baby food in a jar, choose plain vegetables, fruit, and meats. Do not buy dinners or desserts.

**Give me only one new food at a time.** My body must get used to it. Let me eat the food once a day. Wait one week to try another new food.

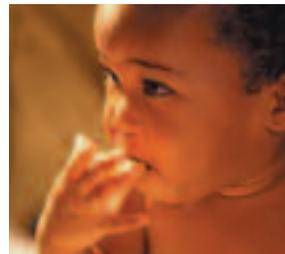
If I vomit, wheeze, get a rash or diarrhea, **stop** feeding the food. Tell the doctor. These are signs I might not be ready.

## I must move through 4 stages of food:

1. Smooth (strained or puree)
2. Mashed (smooth with a few tiny lumps)
3. Chopped (more lumps)
4. Tiny pieces of food

Each stage gets a little harder. Be sure I can chew and swallow foods from one stage before you move me to the next one.

I don't need teeth to chew. I use my jaws to mash food and my tongue and fingers to move it in my mouth.





**I must learn to eat my way.** When I eat a new food, I might spit it out or make a face. All babies do. I will open my mouth if I want more. If I keep my mouth closed or turn my head, don't force me to eat. But, try the food again at another meal.

I will like most foods. But, I might need to taste them 10 times before I know for sure. Please let me try many foods, even those you don't like!

Be patient. I will get food on my hands, face, and hair. Do not fuss or laugh. Be proud of me as I learn to eat.

**Keep me safe.** Wash your hands and mine before you fix my food or feed me. Do not heat my food in a microwave oven. It could burn my mouth.

Put my food in a dish and feed it to me with a baby spoon. Throw out breast milk or formula left in a bottle or cup or food left in a dish after I eat.

Do **not** give me foods I can choke on or get sick from, like:

- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| hot dogs or meat sticks | peanut butter              |
| raw vegetables          | bacon                      |
| whole grapes            | fish with bones            |
| potato or corn chips    | bologna or deli meats      |
| popcorn                 | whole eggs or egg whites   |
| hard candy              | unpasteurized fruit juice  |
| raisins                 | rare or raw meats          |
| nuts                    | honey or food made with it |

## Teach me to drink from a cup.

Use a small cup that does not break. Pour a little water into it. Lift the cup so it touches my lips and I get a taste.

- ♥ I need practice! Let me drink from a cup at meals. Hold the cup and let me take sips. I can drink breast milk, formula, and WIC juice in a cup, too.



As I learn to drink more formula from a cup, I drink less from a bottle. By one year, I should be "off" the bottle.

Do not give me punch, tea, or soda. The sugar hurts my teeth and does not help me grow strong.

## Let me eat food with my fingers.

By 8 or 9 months, I might want to eat food with my fingers. You still need to use a spoon to feed me. But, let me try to feed myself, too.



Fix foods so I can't choke on them. Safe "finger" foods are:

- Tiny pieces of cooked vegetables or soft fruit
- Tiny pieces of cooked meat, chicken, or turkey
- Mashed cooked beans, egg yolk, or tofu
- Chopped noodles or rice
- Bite-size pieces of toast, plain crackers, or soft tortilla

Make pieces of food no bigger than this:



## How much should I eat?

I need to eat about 5 or 6 times a day. One meal might be breast milk or formula. Another meal might be breast milk or formula plus cereal. As I start eating more foods, you can give me 2 or 3 at a meal. Here are some ideas:

Breast milk or formula + baby oatmeal cereal + peaches

Fork-mashed peas + rice + chopped chicken

Breast milk or formula in a cup + tiny pieces of banana + chopped noodles

Start with one or 2 tablespoons of each food. Give me more if I want it.



- ♥ Let me eat until I act full. I might close my lips, turn or shake my head, or raise my arm. Ask me if I am full. Then, let me stop eating if I want to.
- ♥ Eat with me at our family meals. I eat better when you are with me. Let's turn the TV off so we can talk.

**How do you know I eat enough?** The doctor says I am gaining weight and growing well.

Please talk to WIC if you have questions about feeding me.

## Play with me!

Put me on a blanket on the floor. Put a toy just out of my reach so I can move to get it. Roll a ball to me. Hold both my hands and let me walk with you.



## Look what I can do!

I love to learn from you. Read to me. Sing a song. Let's play games like peek-a-boo and so-big. Take me for a walk and show me new things. I'm active—keep an eye on me!

### 6 to 9 Months-

I can sit up and roll over. I will start to creep and crawl. I like to shake things and drop them to see what happens.



### 9 to 12 Months-

I like to use my hands. I can hold my cup. I like to point and wave bye-bye. I say *da-da* and *ma-ma*. I can pull myself up to stand.



## Health and Safety Tips

- ♥ I need check ups and shots to stay healthy. I should visit the doctor at 6 months, 9 months, and one year of age.
- ♥ I must sit when I eat. Never leave me alone when I eat or when changing or bathing me.
- ♥ Clean my gums and teeth with a clean, wet, soft cloth after I eat. Ask the doctor if I need fluoride.
- ♥ Never put me to bed with a bottle. I could choke, get an earache, or ruin my teeth.
- ♥ If other people feed me, be sure to ask what and how much I eat.
- ♥ Let me explore and learn. See each room like I will from the floor, and make it safe for me.
- ♥ Keep me away from cigarette and other tobacco smoke. Smoke hurts my lungs and can make me sick.
- ♥ It's the law! Buckle me into an infant car seat before we ride in a car. Install my seat in the car's back seat, facing backwards.



Office of the Maryland WIC Program

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<http://mdwic.org>

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