I'm Ready!

Feeding Family Foods to Your Baby

1. First Foods From the Table

"I'm tired of strained baby foods. When I'm sitting at the table with my family, the foods my family eats look much more fun! I want to eat with my hands and I'm starting to take sips of juice, water, breast milk, and formula from a cup that someone holds for me."

Does your child do what this child says? Then she is ready to eat the foods below.

Someone has to feed me these:

- Mashed potatoes
- Well-cooked mashed vegetables (like carrots and green beans)
- Well-cooked, finely ground meats
- Yogurt or tofu
- Salmon
- Canned tuna (no more than 1 Tablespoon per week)
- Cooked egg yolk mashed with milk or water
- Soft mashed fruits (like bananas, peaches and pears)
- Mushy rice – well cooked, mashed and soft

"I learn about my world by putting everything in my mouth and I can eat these by myself:"

- Zweibach Toast
- Oven dried toast
- Arrowroot cookies
- Biter Biscuits

"Now I can reach and grab a rattle which I love to bite and chew on. I can sit in a high chair at the table with my family."

DO NOT FEED ME THESE

These foods may cause me to gag and choke:

- Raw vegetables (like carrots or celery) • Large pieces of meat or hot dogs and sausages
- Chicken bones • Nuts - including peanuts • Potato chips, corn or tortilla chips, banana chips
- Fruits with skin or peel, like apples • Fruits with a round shape, like grapes • Cookies

These foods may cause tooth decay:

- Kool-aid • Soda pop • Iced tea or other beverages with sugar

2. Finger Foods

"Look mom, I've learned to sit by myself and to pick up small objects with my thumb and second finger."

If your child can do what this baby says, then he is ready to eat these foods:

Dry Cereals:

- Cheerios, Kix, Chex, or other iron-fortified, low sugar dry cereals

Fruits:

- Banana slices
- Soft cut-up fresh fruit with the skin or peel removed (like melons, kiwi and peaches)
- Canned fruit cocktail (no grapes) or canned fruits (like pears and peaches) cut up

Vegetables:

- Well-cooked fresh or frozen vegetables (like green beans, broccoli and carrots)
- Canned vegetables (buy low salt or rinse vegetables in water before serving to baby)

Other soft foods:

- Cheese sticks, hard cheese only (Cheddar, Monterey Jack, or Swiss cheese, cut in sticks)
- Large curd cottage cheese
- Fish sticks or boneless baked fish
- Small pieces of tender meats (small meatballs, beef, pork, or chicken)
- Scrambled eggs * yolk only for infants less than 1 year of age with a family history of food allergies
- Tofu - cut into small squares

"I chew food even though my teeth may not be through."

"I am proud of my new skills and may want to do things by myself, like drink from a cup and eat with my fingers."

3. More Textured Foods From Family Meals

"I can pull myself to standing and can walk while holding onto furniture. You might see me grabbing at my parent's spoon because I try to copy everything I see. I like to play with my spoon and can finger feed myself. Mom still needs to feed me sometimes, but I eat most of the same foods as everyone else."

Does your child do what this child says? Then she is ready to eat the foods below.

Foods I can eat:

- Thick stews and hearty vegetable soups
- Stewed foods or foods cooked in a crock pot
- Chicken and dumplings
- Borscht
- Soft pieces of cooked meats and vegetables mixed into mashed potatoes
- Macaroni and cheese
- Grilled cheese
- Lasagna, spaghetti, or other soft pasta
- Mild chili
- Quiches
- Well cooked rice dishes with soft/sticky rice

DO NOT FEED ME THESE

These foods may cause me to gag and choke:

- Raw vegetables (like carrots or celery) • Hot dogs, sausages or bacon
- Tacos • Nuts, including peanuts • Popcorn • Grapes • Peanut butter • Coconut
- Foods that splinter such as potato chips, corn or tortilla chips and banana chips
- Fruits with skin or peel or round shape (like apples or grapes) • Corn • French fries
- Hard candy (like Lifesavers or mints) • Dried fruits such as raisins, apricots or dates

These foods may cause tooth decay:

- Kool-aid • Soda pop • Iced tea or beverages with sugar

4. Feeding the Floor: Learning to Use a Spoon

"Look at me. I can walk and love to throw things. I say a few words and know lots more. I want to feed myself with a spoon. Oops, I missed my mouth. But that's OK!"

These I can eat by myself with a spoon

Foods that will stick to a spoon when scooped or turned upside down:

- Yogurt
- Applesauce, puddings
- Cooked cereal oatmeal, cream of rice, cream-of-wheat, grits, Malt-O-Meal, farina
- Cheerios soaked in milk
- Mashed pork and beans or mashed mild chili
- Refried beans
- Casseroles
- Stews
- Cottage cheese
- Egg salad

These I can't eat by myself with a spoon because they slide off:

- Soups
- Custards, Flan
- Canned fruits
- Jello

5. Foods That Need More Chewing

"I'm a little older now. My back teeth finally came in. Now you can give me small pieces of harder to chew foods, such as meat and crunchy vegetables and fruits."

These foods require back teeth (molars)

Raw:

- Carrots, celery
- Broccoli
- Cucumbers
- Cabbage, coleslaw
- Cauliflower
- Radishes, turnips
- Water chestnuts
- Pineapple
- Grapes cut in half
- Other raw fruits and vegetables

Other foods:

- Dried fruit, such as raisins
- Shredded coconut
- Well cooked meats such as beef, pork, chicken, or turkey
- Hotdogs and sausage, cut lengthwise

"Even though I love to walk and run, I need to sit down to eat so I won't choke. Plus, I like eating at the table with my family."

6.

"Now I can eat lots of different foods from all the food groups. I can drink milk from my cup at every meal, I don't need my bottle anymore."*

"Drinking from a cup helps me to take care of my nice new teeth."

**Give whole milk until 24 months of age*

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Washington State Department of Health

DOH 961-141 (Rev. 04/06)