

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.

Feed me breast milk or baby formula with iron until I turn one. You can still breastfeed me after one year if we want. If you chose not to use breast milk, feed me baby formula until I turn one.

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 Nutritionist 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 do not want food by closing my mouth or turning my head.

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

- Baby cereal – rice, oatmeal, barley
- Vegetables – squash, peas, carrots, green beans
- Fruit – applesauce, peaches, bananas, pears
- Proteins – beef, chicken, turkey, scrambled egg yolks, dried beans (cooked and mashed)

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.

Start me off with cereal and slowly progress to pureed meats, vegetables, and fruits. Keep my foods plain and do not mix them. 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. Use your WIC Shopping Guide to help you make the best choices.

If I vomit, wheeze, get a rash or diarrhea, stop feeding me the food. Tell the doctor. These are signs I might not be ready or that I might have an allergy to a food.

I must move through four stages of food textures:

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

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

I do not need teeth to chew soft foods. I use my gums to mash food and my tongue and fingers to move it in my mouth.



I must learn to eat my own 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, do not force me to eat. Try the food again at another meal.

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

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

I will show you when I am hungry. I will move my arms and legs a lot. I will turn my head and open my mouth. I might suck my hand or fuss a little. Please feed me before I cry. I eat best when I am calm. Find a quiet place when it is time for me to eat.

I will show you when I am full. I will stop sucking and let go of the nipple. If I am on solids, I will turn my head away from the spoon. I will look relaxed or sleepy. Offer the breast, bottle, or spoon again to make sure I do not want more to eat. Let me decide if I want to stop eating. Once I get full, I might frown, fuss, and kick if you keep feeding me.



Keep me safe while I eat. Wash your hands and mine before you fix my food or feed me. If you heat my food in a microwave oven, please follow all package directions. It could burn my mouth.

Put my food in a dish and feed it to me with a baby spoon. Throw out food left in a dish after I finish eating.

Foods I can choke on:

- Hard foods like candy, peanuts, popcorn, or nuts
- Seeds (such as pumpkin or sunflower seeds)
- Raw vegetables and hard raw fruits
- Slick, round foods like meat sticks, hot dogs, whole grapes, and cherry tomatoes
- Sharp foods like corn chips
- Sticky foods like raisins or peanut butter
- Bacon

Foods that can make me sick:

- Raw or rare meat, chicken, turkey, or fish
- Raw or soft-cooked eggs
- Unpasteurized fruit juice or cider
- Honey or food made with it
- Whole eggs or egg whites (you can feed me egg yolks)
- Bologna or deli meat

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 100% juice in a cup. Limit juice to 4 ounces or less per day and dilute it with water.



As I learn to drink more breast milk or formula from a cup, I drink less from a bottle. By one year, I should no longer be drinking from a bottle.

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

Let me eat food with my fingers.



When I am 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.

Prepare 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
- Cooked and mashed dried beans, egg yolk, or tofu
- Chopped noodles or rice, or soft tortillas

How much should I eat?

As I get better at eating, I will 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 of them at a meal. Here are some ideas:

- Breast milk or formula in a cup + 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 1 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 the WIC Nutritionist
if you have any questions about feeding me.**

Play with me!

Put me on a blanket on the floor and sit down with me. 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!

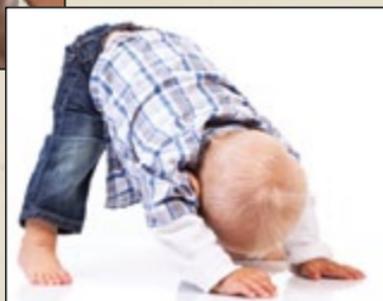
I love to learn from you. Read to me. Sing a song. Let's play games like peek-a-boo and so-big. Take me for a walk and show me new things. I'm active – keep an eye on me!

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 checkups 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.
- Never put me to bed with a bottle. I could choke, get an earache, or ruin my teeth.
- Continue to put me on my back to sleep in a crib.
- Do not let me sleep on the couch.
- If other people feed me, be sure to ask what food and how much food I had to eat.
- Let me explore and learn. See each room like I will from the floor, and make it safe for me.
- It's the law! Buckle me into an infant car seat when we ride in a car. Install my seat in the car's back seat, facing backwards.
- Put sunscreen on me when I play in the sun. Use a sunscreen that protects against UVA and UVB rays. Make sure the sunscreen has an SPF of at least 30. Apply every 2 hours.
- Keep me away from cigarette smoke, drugs, and alcohol. Those habits are not healthy for you or me.



Ask the WIC Nutritionist if you need help with any of these tips.



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health • Nutrition Services Branch
www.ncdhhs.gov • www.nutritionnc.com

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.