

Help  
me  
be

HEALTHY



## Birth to 6 months

My name is: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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# I am your baby.

## Please help me.

I want to grow strong in body, heart, and mind. I grow best when you:

- Hold and cuddle me.
- Smile and talk to me.
- Listen to me when I “talk” to you with my face and body.

## Feed me right...with food and love.

- Feed me breast milk, it is the only food I need for the first 6 months. If you choose not to use breast milk, feed me baby formula with iron.
- I know when I need to eat. Feed me when I show I am hungry.
- I know how much to eat. Let me eat until I show I am full.
- Please talk to the WIC Nutritionist or a WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator if you need help recognizing my needs.



**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 may stick my tongue out or smack my lips. I might suck on my hand or fuss a little. 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. I will look relaxed or sleepy. Ask me if I am full and offer the breast or bottle 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.

## You want the best for me!

**I eat more when I am having a growth spurt.** Growth spurts usually occur at 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months, but can happen at any time. If you breastfeed me, I will want to nurse longer or be at the breast more often. Your body will make more milk, so don't worry. If I drink formula, I may act hungry after I finish a bottle. I may need an additional 1 to 2 ounces.

**How will you know I am eating enough?** I wet 6 or more diapers a day and the doctor says I am gaining weight and growing well.

### Birth to 4 months –

I might want to eat every 2 to 3 hours (about 8 to 12 times in 24 hours). My stomach can hold about 2 to 3 ounces at a time.

### 4 to 6 months –

I might want to eat every 3 to 4 hours (about 6 to 8 times in 24 hours). My stomach can hold about 4 to 6 ounces at a time.

## I need your touch.

**Hold me when you feed me.** I feel safe in your arms. Look at my face and into my eyes. I will learn to look back. I love to look at your face. Talk to me. I will learn to smile and coo.



Sometimes I may take a break from eating. I am not full yet; I just want to rest or share some special time with you.

Help me stay awake while you feed me. Things that may help are undressing me to my diaper or rubbing my back. If I drink from a bottle, do not let me fall asleep with milk in my mouth. I could choke or get an earache.

## Keep me safe while I eat.

I can get sick from germs and the wrong food. Please:

- Wash your hands before you feed me or fix my food and formula.
- If you use a bottle to feed me, put only pumped breast milk or formula in it.
- Mix infant formula following the directions on the container or how the doctor tells you.
- Store bottles of breast milk or formula in the fridge. Use breast milk within 5 days. Use formula within 24 hours.
- Never heat my bottle or food in a microwave oven. It can get too hot and burn my mouth.
- Throw out formula left in the bottle when I am finished eating.
- Refrigerate breast milk left in the bottle when I am finished eating. It may be used within 4 hours.
- Do not feed me water, unless the doctor tells you to.
- Do not feed me honey or food made with honey. It can make me sick.
- Do not let me eat (or taste) the food you are eating. I may not be ready.

## When can I try a new food?

I grow best on breast milk or formula. Do not feed me any other food until I am 6 months old. Ask my doctor or the WIC Nutritionist if I am ready to try a new food. I must be able to:

- Sit up and hold my head steady.
- Show I want food by opening my mouth to take it from a spoon.
- Show I do not want food by closing my mouth or turning my head away from you.

Baby cereal is usually the first food introduced. Mix the cereal in a bowl with breast milk or formula. Start me out with thin cereal (like cream soup).





Sit and face me. Smile and tell me I get to taste cereal. Put a little cereal on a baby spoon. Touch my lips with it. If I won't eat the cereal, wait a week and try again. If I eat the cereal, feed it to me once a day.

If I vomit, wheeze, get a rash or diarrhea, stop feeding me the cereal. Tell the doctor. These are signs that I might not be ready. It may take one week to see any signs.

After a week, if I do not show any signs, it is safe for me to eat rice cereal. You can make it thicker and let me eat a little more.

I might eat 2 or more tablespoons of cereal twice a day. Throw out any cereal left in the dish after I finish eating.

The next baby cereal to try is oatmeal or barley. Pick one to try first. Let me eat it for a week. Watch for signs that I am not ready. If I do not show any signs, it is safe for me to eat it.

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

### **Spit up...Gas...Dirty Diapers**

Babies must get used to food in their tummies. So, we sometimes spit up, get gas, grunt, and turn red when we have a bowel movement. It does not hurt and goes away as we grow.

- I spit up less if I am calm when I eat and stop eating when I get full.
- I swallow air when I eat or cry. If I swallow too much, I might need to be burped. Hold me with my tummy against your chest or lap. Gently pat or rub my back.
- I might have one or more bowel movements a day. Sometimes, I might not have any for a day or two. This is not constipation. Constipation is a hard, dry stool that hurts to pass and makes me cry.



## Play with me!



Please don't keep me in a baby carrier or infant seat. Put me on a blanket on the floor. Sit with me on the floor. Watch how I stretch and kick my legs and move my arms. I am making them stronger.

Put me on my tummy. I will learn to push myself up with my arms. I will learn to roll over.

## Look what I can do!

I am ready to learn about you, about me, and the world I live in. I learn best when I feel happy, loved, and safe.

### Birth to 3 months

The world is new to me and it can be scary. I cry a lot at first. Crying is my way to say I need you. When you come to me, I calm down. I learn that you care.

I must learn what day and night are. At first, I sleep 2 to 3 hours, wake up, eat, and go back to sleep again. It might take 3 months or more to learn to sleep through the night. Please be patient as I learn.

I know your voice. I like to watch you and learn what you do. Show me things and tell me about them.

### 4 to 6 months

I start to settle into a routine. I can sleep longer at night. I am growing strong and active.

I can hold my head up. I also use my hands to pick things up and put them in my mouth. Keep an eye on me so I don't choke or swallow anything that could hurt me.

I know my name when you say it. I babble *ba-ba-ba!* and I laugh. Let's play peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake. Please read to me. Show me the pictures and tell me what they are.



## Health and Safety Tips

- I need checkups and shots to stay healthy. I should visit the doctor a few days after I am born and again before one month, then at 2 months, 4 months, and 6 months of age.
- Ask my doctor if I need a Vitamin D supplement.
- Clean my mouth after I eat. Wipe my gums with a clean, wet, soft cloth.
- Never put me to bed with a bottle or prop a bottle so that I have to eat by myself. I can choke, get an earache, or ruin my teeth. I need you to hold and love me while I am eating.
- Put me on my back to sleep (unless the doctor says not to). Use a firm mattress. Keep pillows, quilts, and toys out of my bed.
- Do not let me sleep on the couch.
- Never leave me alone at bath time or while changing 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.



- 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.**



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