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## Feeding Tips for Older Babies

Your baby is now used to eating solids and may be grabbing at the spoon or picking up food by herself. This means she is ready for more self-feeding, a whole new messy adventure! Continue to offer new foods and textures, especially a wide variety of iron-rich foods, and fruits and vegetables and remember to be patient; you may need to offer foods as many as 10 times before she accepts them.

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Breast milk or infant formula is still an important source of nutrition throughout the first year and up to 2 years and beyond, or for as long as you want to continue to breastfeed or formula feed.

## New flavours

Continue to offer new foods plenty of times. Building healthy eating habits now may last a lifetime. New foods are often rejected at first but by offering them a number of times prepared in different ways, many of the foods will be accepted. And why not show baby how it's done by including healthier food choices into meals for the whole family. If you find that your baby is rejecting a new food, seeing others enjoy the food may help encourage them to [try it for themselves](#) <sup>[6]</sup>.

Here are some foods that you can start to try if you haven't already:

- Whole (or homogenized) cow's milk (starting at 9-12 months)
- Other dairy: hard, grated cheeses, soft pasteurized cheese, full-fat yogurt and cottage cheese
- Family foods, as long as they're mashed or chopped into bite-size pieces and light on seasoning
- Pasta, rice, toasted breads, bagels and plain muffins
- New fruits: mashed or finely chopped melon, papaya, peeled apricot
- New vegetables: bite-sized, steamed broccoli and cauliflower "mini-trees"
- Protein: cooked and finely chopped eggs, ground meat, poultry, boneless fish, tofu, legumes and beans
- Breast milk, formula or water served in a cup

## Pump-up meals with iron

As you continue to introduce baby to new foods, don't forget to offer 2 servings of iron-rich foods each day. Meat, meat alternatives and [iron-fortified infant cereals](#) <sup>[7]</sup> are all great choices when looking to ensure iron is included in your baby's diet. Serving vitamin C-rich foods along with plant-based iron foods aids in iron absorption. Learn more about [why is iron so important](#) <sup>[8]</sup>.

## Whole cow's milk

Starting at 9-12 months, you can begin to introduce whole (3.25%) cow's milk, but avoid offering low-fat (skim or 1%) and 2% milk. Your little one needs the extra fat in whole milk at this stage in her life. 24 oz (720 mL or about 3 cups) is the maximum amount of whole cow's milk that your little one should drink per day.

## New food textures

Continue to introduce new textures to help baby to develop her oral and motor skills. Begin to serve your baby finely chopped or minced foods and work up to offering soft foods cut into small pieces to encourage self-feeding. Learn more about [which foods make appropriate finger foods](#) [9].

Watch out for potential choking hazards. Learn more about [which](#) [9] foods are appropriate for your little one and which you should hold off on, for now.

## Time to eat

Your older baby should be offered 3-4 meals each day. Try to eat as many meals together as a family with your baby so that she can enjoy the social aspects of eating and learn good eating habits from others. This is also an opportunity for the rest of the family to show her how much they enjoy eating healthy foods such as vegetables. For babies aged 9-11 months old, you can expect that they will normally eat about ½ of a cup, about the size of a scoop of ice cream, at each meal. Here's a sample of what your baby may be eating. Remember, this is only a guide.

### Breakfast

- Breast milk, formula, or whole cow's milk (at least 9-12 months old)
- 2-4 tbsp iron-fortified infant cereal
- 2-3 tbsp puréed, mashed or finely chopped fruit

### Lunch

- Breast milk, formula, or whole cow's milk (at least 9-12 months old)
- 2-3 tbsp meat or alternative
- 2-3 tbsp puréed mashed or finely chopped cooked vegetables
- 2-3 tbsp puréed mashed or finely chopped fruit

### Dinner

- Breast milk, formula, or whole cow's milk (at least 9-12 months old)
- 2-3 tbsp meat or alternative
- 2-3 tbsp puréed, mashed or finely chopped cooked vegetables
- 2-3 tbsp puréed mashed or finely chopped fruit

Depending on her appetite, 1-2 snacks per day should also be offered. Healthy nutritious snacks are the best way to keep your little one happy and energized until her next meal. A great snack at this age is breast milk or infant formula.

## Hunger and fullness cues

Just like before you started your baby on solid foods, your little one has ways of telling you when she wants more food and when she's done. By learning to recognize these signals, you can help your little one to develop healthy eating habits. Remember, your responsibility is to offer food and it is your baby's responsibility to decide how much or whether she eats.

Here are some hunger and fullness cues that are common in babies from 8-12 months of age:

### Hunger Cues

### Fullness cues

- Reaches for food
- Points to food
- Gets excited when food is presented
- Expresses desire for certain foods with words or sounds
- Starts eating more slowly
- Clenches mouth shut or pushes food away
- Shakes head to say “no more”

## Introducing a cup

Whether you’ve been breastfeeding or bottle-feeding you may want to consider introducing a cup. While it is ideal to get your little one drinking out of an open cup, many parents opt to introduce a sippy cup for when you and your little one are on the go. Learning to drink from an open cup is challenging and will require you to assist in holding the cup at first. Your patience will be worth it, as babies enjoy learning new skills and healthcare experts recommend this progression to a cup early in life, in order to help prevent early dental cavities.

This new skill can also be messy, and wet. When offering an open cup, put enough liquid for a few sips so that less goes down her face and on the floor. Another good tip is to put water in an open cup and leave other beverages for the sippy cup so that when it ends up on the floor, high-chair and your baby, it won’t be a sticky mess. Be patient and positive.

## Feeding tips

- Introduce new foods one at a time - waiting 2 days before trying another food - to make sure your baby doesn’t have an allergic reaction.
- Choking is still a danger. All foods have the potential to cause choking, so ensure that your child is seated and well-supervised while eating. Learn more about [choking hazards and making safe food choices for your little one](#) [9].
- Eat as a family whenever possible and set a good example by incorporating healthy foods on everyone’s plates.
- Learn your baby’s [hunger and fullness cues](#) [10] and trust that she knows when she is hungry or full.
- Transition to an open cup in a controlled environment, such as at the dinner table.
- Encourage self-feeding with finger foods. For finger food ideas for your little one, see [Changing Food and Nutrition for Your 8-12 Month Old](#) [11].

[Read more](#) [12]

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[8] <https://www.nestlebaby.ca/en/0-6-months/breastfeeding/baby-nutrition-and-feeding-your-guide>

[9] <https://www.nestlebaby.ca/en/8-12-months/infant-nutrition/safe-food-handling-making-safe-food-choices-your-little-one>

[10] <https://www.nestlebaby.ca/en/e-learning/your-6-12-month-olds-hunger-and-fullness-cues>

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