



## Infant Feeding Guidelines

### **BREAST FEEDING**

Breastfeeding is known to be the most nutritionally effective and efficient method of feeding an infant. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Dietetic Association and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology have all stated that mother's milk is under normal circumstances the best food for a baby. In order that breastfeeding be both beneficial and enjoyable, it must have the wholehearted commitment of both parents.

While breastfeeding:

Drink plenty of fluids (but not caffeinated beverage)

- Eat a variety of foods
- Avoid dieting to lose weight rapidly
- Try to avoid peanuts, shrimp and shellfish

### **INFANT FORMULA FEEDING**

Commercially prepared formulas replace breast milk when nursing is unavailable. Most formulas have a cow's milk base but are made to resemble breast milk as closely as possible. Either breast milk, formula or a combination of both will be the staple of your baby's diet at birth, gradually decreasing in amount and nutritional importance as solids are introduced beginning midway through your baby's first year.

### **GENERAL RULES FOR INTRODUCTION OF SOLIDS**

Introduction of solid foods should be based on your baby's developmental process. A baby should be able to participate in his/her feeding by indicating desire or disinterest in eating. It is advisable to wait until signs of readiness are evident before starting solid foods.

1. Solids may be introduced when your baby is four months of age if formula fed, or six months if breastfed. We sometimes use the guideline of 15lbs as a minimum weight or a child that has doubled birth weight. Another rule of thumb is a child that is hungry after 8-10 breast feedings or drinks more than 32 ounces of formula each day. Earlier introduction of solids might be associated with allergies and gastrointestinal disturbances.

2. Do not introduce several new foods at the same time. Foods should be added singly at intervals of no more than one every three days. If the infant has an allergic reaction, it will then be easy to tell which

food is the culprit. Begin by giving one or two teaspoons of food and gradually increase the amount. Common signs of an allergic reaction are diarrhea, vomiting, hives, and excessive irritability.

3. Never add semi solid to your baby's bottle unless directed to do so. Sometimes we may recommend putting cereal in the bottle for certain specific situations but on the whole is not a good idea.

4. Between 10-12 months, gradually delete strained foods and add appropriate table foods.

5. Commercial and homemade baby foods are equally acceptable. Do not add salt/pepper to your baby's food and limit the amount of desserts offered.

6. Avoid products with nitrates (cold cuts, hot dogs) artificial colors and additives.

7. It is not advisable to give cow's milk to your child during the first year.

Foods that may cause an allergic reaction and should be avoided in infancy include egg whites, seafood, chocolate, citrus fruits, tomatoes and peanuts. Honey is another food that should be avoided as it may contain botulism spores. However, it is ok to give honey as an ingredient in processed foods (ex: honey graham crackers).

## **INTRODUCTION OF SOLIDS AT MONTHLY INTERVALS**

When is your baby ready?

DEVELOPMENT-Usually at this age babies can suck and swallow in a coordinated fashion.

FOOD-Breast milk/formula 5-8 times a day or on demand. Solids are not recommended.

### FOUR TO SIX MONTHS:

When is your baby ready?

DEVELOPMENT-Usually at this age the child can swallow non-liquid food, transfer food from front of tongue to back of mouth, begin to grasp and sit with support, have control of head and body movements, and may take solids from a spoon.

FOOD-Breast milk or Formula. At 4 months fortified cereal; rice cereal is usually recommended as the very first food because it is less allergenic. Rice, oatmeal and barley cereal made by both Gerber and Beechnut are iron and calcium fortified. This is important for children in the first two years of life. Begin with 1 tablespoon cereal mixed with 2 tablespoons breast milk/formula to an applesauce consistency. Increase thickness and amount up to 3-6 tablespoons divided in two feedings a.m. /p.m. At 5 months strained fruit such as peaches, pears, applesauce or bananas served in two divided feedings, a.m. and p.m. (1-3 tablespoons each feeding). Stage 1 foods are ok at this time. S

### SIX TO EIGHT MONTHS:

When is your baby ready?

DEVELOPMENT-Usually at this age the child can indicate a desire for food by opening his/her mouth and leaning forward, can lean back and turn away when disinterested, chewing movements and teething begin, hand coordination improves, the child may sit up without support, start some form of crawling, scooting or rolling, may hold a bottle or a cup, drink from a sipper cup with help and usually have good control of head and body movements.

FOOD-Breast milk or formula, iron fortified cereal, strained fruits, strained vegetables. Start with squash, carrots and sweet potatoes, and gradually add green beans, peas and spinach. Offer dark green or yellow vegetables daily to ensure that baby gets enough Vitamin A. Begin with 1-2 tablespoons and continue to offer larger servings to keep up with your child's appetite. Gradually add a lunchtime serving at this time. At 8 months you may add meat, strained chicken, beef, veal or turkey at noon and p.m. (1-2 tablespoons each feeding). A cup is ideally introduced at this time. Offer small amounts of pasteurized fruit juices such as apple, grape, or pear enriched in vitamin C. Stage 2 foods may be introduced at this time.

#### EIGHT TO TEN MONTHS:

When is your baby ready?

DEVELOPMENT-Usually at this age the child can use their forefinger and thumb to grasp small objects and begin feeding themselves with finger, hand coordination is improving, they may learn to crawl or pull themselves up to stand, easily chew soft foods, usually sit alone and are capable of mashing food with their gums. Taste preference also begins to expand.

FOOD-Breast milk or formula, iron fortified cereal  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup in the a.m., fruits  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup in the a.m. and p.m. Vegetables  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 jar twice a day. Meat or meat substitutes can be introduced at this age. Again, introduce only one food at a time. Try strained beef, poultry, pork or veal. Good sources of protein and iron that can be introduced at this stage include mild cheese, cottage cheese, plain yogurt and pureed beans. Meats 2-4 tablespoons at noon and p.m. may be offered. Increase to larger portions gradually to keep up with baby's appetite. At 10 months egg yolk only. Finger foods are ok at this time including cooked vegetable strips, peeled soft fruit, and grilled chicken strips. Infants at this age are usually eating three meals a day plus snacks. Stage 3 foods can be introduced at this time.

#### TEN TO TWELVE MONTHS:

When is your baby ready?

DEVELOPMENT-Usually at this age the child can self-feed with help, may take juice from a Sippy cup, tongue motility improves to allow true drinking, may handle bite sized foods and are often learning to use a spoon. Likely the child has teeth and can bite through a variety of textures easily.

FOOD-Breast milk/formula, iron fortified cereal,  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup in a.m., jar of fruits per day, vegetables 1 jar per day, meats 4 tablespoons per day usually for noon and p.m. At 10 months small amounts of citrus juices are ok, introduction to mashed or chopped table food is also acceptable. At 12 months a whole egg may be given, continue cottage cheese, slice cheese and yogurt. Start whole milk and wean to a cup. By the time a child is 1 year old his/her meal patterns will become similar to the family pattern. Infants know when they are full. If they push food away, do not force them to finish the meal, as this potentially could lead to bad eating habits. Sometimes infants will show a dislike for food; again it's best to not force the foods but rather try reintroducing 1-2 weeks later.

Any questions, please feel free to call us. This is only meant as an outline to help assist you.