# **Feed Me! Birth to 6 Months.**

A Helpful guide to feeding your baby from birth to six months old.

From Birth

**Breastfeed me, or feed me baby formula with iron.**

* If you’re breastfeeding me, please continue until my first birthday or longer.
* Please don’t feed me any other foods until I am about 6 months old. I’m not ready for them yet!

**I know when I need to eat.**

* Feed me when I show you I am hungry. I will move my arms and legs, turn my head and open my mouth. I might suck on my hand or fuss a little. Please feed me before I cry.

**I know how much to eat.**

* Let me eat until I show you I am full. I will stop sucking and let go. If I close my mouth and turn away, that means I am done. If you feed me with a bottle, please don’t try to make me finish it!

**How do you know if I’m eating enough?**

* After the first week, I will have 6 or more wet diapers every day. The doctor will say that I am gaining weight and growing well.

**Birth to 4 months**

**I need to eat about 8 to 12 times or more in 24 hours.**

* I might want to eat more often when I’m growing faster. My tummy can hold about 2 to 3 ounces at a time.
* It might take me 3 months or more to be able to sleep through the night, 6 hours or more. Please be patient with me. Please don’t put cereal in my bottle to try to help me sleep. I’m not ready for cereal yet!

4 to 6 months

**I need to eat about 6 to 8 times or more in 24 hours.**

* My tummy can hold about 4 to 6 ounces at a time.
* I need your touch. Smile and talk to me. I love to look at your face. If you feed me with a bottle, don’t prop up my bottle or put me in bed with it. Please hold me close when you feed me.

**Dad—please hold me and talk to me**

* You can bathe me, change my diaper, burp me, read to me, and play with me! I love to spend time with you.

**Around 6 Months**

When I am about 6 months old, I will probably be ready to try some solid foods. I need to be able to do **all** these things:

• sit up with support

• hold my head steady

• put my fingers or toys in my mouth

• show I want food by opening my mouth

• close my lips over the spoon

• show I don’t want food by turning my head away

• keep food in my mouth and swallow it

If our family has food allergies or I was born early, talk to the doctor and WIC before you try feeding me other foods.

**When I’m ready, try feeding me a little bit of solid food.**

* You can start with baby cereal with iron—try rice, oatmeal, or barley. Mix the cereal with breastmilk or formula—make it thin at first. When I get better at eating it, you can make it thicker.
* Feed me my food with a baby spoon. Cereal in my bottle can make me gain too much weight— and I need to learn to use a spoon!

 **I need to sit up to eat.**

* Hold the spoon near my mouth and wait for me to look at it. Then, put a little bit on my lips so I can taste it.

 **Wait until I open my mouth before you try to put food in.**

* Wait until I am ready for each bite. When I turn my head away, that means I am done. Don’t try to get me to eat more!

**Be patient while I am learning to eat.**

* If I won’t eat baby cereal, wait a week and try again. I will do better when I am ready. Start feeding me baby cereal by about 7 months, unless my doctor says to wait.

**Keep me safe and healthy!**

* Wash your hands before you feed me. Germs could make me sick.
* If you feed me with a bottle, only put breastmilk or formula in it. If you feed me formula, mix it the way the can says.
* You can store bottles of breastmilk in the refrigerator for 5 days. Formula is safe for 24 hours. You can also freeze breastmilk—ask WIC how.
* If you heat my bottle or container of food, please shake or stir it well, and test it before feeding me.
* Throw away what is left in the bottle when I am done. It could make me sick if I drink it later.
* Wipe my gums after I eat. Use a soft wet cloth.
* Don’t feed me honey or foods made with honey. I could get serious food poisoning.
* I don’t need to drink water or juice. I get all the liquid I need from breastmilk or formula. Please don’t give me any sweet drinks or soda.
* Take me to the doctor for my check ups and shots.
* Put me on my back to sleep.
* Keep me away from tobacco smoke.
* Never leave me alone at bath time or while you are changing my diaper.
* Always put me in my car seat when we ride in a car. Put my seat in the back seat, facing backwards. Never leave me alone in the car.
* Crying is my way to say I need you. When you come to me, I calm down. I learn that you care. Holding me will not spoil me.