

Quick Tips for Healthy Snacking at All Ages

These handouts give quick tips according to each age group of children. It is important to note that infants, toddlers, pre-school, school-aged and teens have different needs dependent on their level of activity.

Infants 0-12 Months

Setting up a Lactation Room

Breastfeeding mothers need a clean, private space to feed their children and express milk. The space should include: electrical outlet, comfortable chair and nearby access to running water.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends breastfeeding as the sole source of nutrition for your baby for about 6 months. When you add solid foods to your baby's diet, continue breastfeeding until at least 12 months. You can continue to breastfeed after 12 months if you and your baby desire.



Starting Solid Foods

The AAP recommends introducing solid foods between 4 and 6 months of age following these guidelines:

- The baby should be able to sit up with good head control.
- If the baby turns his/her head away from food, it may be a sign he/she is not ready for solid foods. Try again in 1-2 weeks.
- If the baby pushes food out of his/her mouth, he/she may not yet be able to move food through the mouth to the throat for swallowing. This is a normal step in development and takes some practice.
- Try diluting the food first, then gradually thickening the texture.
- You may also wait and retry solids in 1-2 weeks.

Solid Foods to Try First

- Single grain baby cereal is a good choice for the first solid food.
- Choose cereal made for babies and iron-fortified.
- Baby cereals are available pre-mixed or dry.
- Follow packaged directions for preparation.
- You can mix dry cereal with breast milk, formula or water.

Introducing New Foods

Try one new food at a time. Wait at least 2 to 3 days before starting another. With each new food introduced, watch for any allergic reactions (diarrhea, rash, or vomiting). If any of these occur, stop using the new food and consult with the child's doctor.

Within a few months of starting solid foods, the baby's daily diet should include a variety of foods each day that may include: breast milk and/or formula, meats, and cereal

Moving on to Finger Foods

Once babies can sit up and bring their hands and objects to their mouth, you can give them finger foods to help them learn to feed themselves. Avoid choking by adding soft, easy-to-swallow foods in bite-sized pieces such as:

- Small pieces of banana
- Wafer-type crackers
- Scrambled eggs
- Well-cooked pasta
- Well-cooked chicken finely chopped
- Well-cooked and cut up yellow squash, peas, and potatoes

Do not give babies any food that requires chewing or can be a choking hazard, including hot dogs and meat sticks; nuts and seeds; chunks of meat or cheese; whole grapes; popcorn; chunks of peanut butter; raw vegetables; fruit chunks, such as apple chunks; and hard, gooey, or sticky candy.

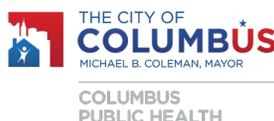
Should I give babies juice?

Children do not need juice.

- Babies younger than 6 months should not be given juice.
- If desired, a child can be given 100% fruit juice after 6 months of age.
- Only offer juice in a cup, never in a bottle.
- Limit juice to 4 ounces a day. More than this will reduce his/her appetite for more nutritious foods.
- Juice can cause diaper rash, diarrhea, weight gain and tooth decay.

Adapted from: American Academy of Pediatrics

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