

INFANT FEEDING GUIDELINES

- Before a baby turns 6 months old or is developmentally ready (see signs below), his/her nutrition should come from breastmilk or iron-fortified formula (unless instructed otherwise by pediatrician). Introducing any other foods or liquids too soon will NOT benefit and may harm the baby.
- A vitamin D supplement is recommended for all breastfed babies who drink less than 32 oz of formula a day.
- Breastfed and formula fed babies don't need extra water unless in very hot weather. Avoid giving sweetened beverages or tea.
- Introduce solids only when baby can:
 - Sit with support
 - Hold head steady
 - Keep food in mouth and swallow it (i.e. does not push spoon out with tongue)
- The order of introducing foods does not matter. You can start with high iron foods such as an iron-fortified infant cereal (mixed with breast milk or formula) or pureed meats.
- Begin with pureed foods, then progress to mashed foods, then to chopped, soft cooked foods.
- Introduce ONE new food every 3 days. Watch for allergy symptoms: skin rash, diarrhea, stomach ache, coughing or wheezing. Allergy related foods: fish, shellfish, peanuts, oranges, tomatoes, milk, egg whites, soy products, wheat products, corn, and chocolate.
- In the beginning, use single ingredient, not mixed foods. This will help identify source of allergy.
- Give solids by spoon. Do not put solids in bottle (may cause choking).
- Hold off fruit juices until baby is ready to use a cup (around 6 months) and limit to 4 oz a day.
- Avoid adding salt, soy sauce, sugar, honey and fat into baby's foods or drinks. Honey can cause food poisoning, and other additives may cause future health problems.
- Limit use of rice porridge due to its low nutritive value. Add cereal, strained meats or vegetables into porridge to increase its nutritive value.
- Avoid use of salted fish, dried scallops, dried shrimp, preserved meats, fermented bean curds in baby's food due to its high salt content.
- Avoid foods that can cause choking: nuts, seeds, hard candies, corn, whole grapes, hot dog, hard foods, raw vegetables and foods with seeds.
- Wean off bottle by 10 – 12 months. Offer whole milk at one year of age.

Reference: California Infant Feeding Guidelines, California Department of Public Health, Dec. 2016

