

## Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Infants Ages 4 through 7 Months

### Breast Milk and Formula

- Feed your baby either breast milk or iron-fortified formula only for the first 6 months of life. Even after starting solid foods, breastfeeding and formula feeding should continue until 12 months of age. Unless breastfeeding continues, whole milk should be served after 12 months of age.
- Starting and continuing to breastfeed can be challenging. Don't give up! If you need support or have questions, call a local lactation consultant or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) in your area. For more information on breastfeeding contact:
  - WIC toll-free at 1-800-222-2189
  - Toll-free National Women's Health Helpline at 1-800-994-9662
  - Your state breastfeeding coalition. Find it at: <http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/Coalitions/CoalitionsDirectory/tabid/74/Default.aspx>
- Many infants will need to receive a daily Vitamin D supplement, which is necessary to ensure healthy bone growth and development. Ask your health care provider about the amount of Vitamin D needed for your infant.

### Solid Foods

- Around 6 months your baby will begin to show signs that he is ready for solid foods. Signs include:
  - Absence of tongue thrust reflex
  - Good neck and head control
  - Increased demand for breast milk or formula that continues for a few days
- Offer single-ingredient foods first and wait 2 – 3 days between each new food. This makes it easier to identify the offending food if he experiences a bad reaction (i.e., allergy).



- Introduce iron-fortified rice cereal first, followed by iron-fortified oat or barley cereal.
- Offer different fruits and vegetables. They should be:
  - Puréed, mashed or strained to prevent choking
  - Served plain without added fat, sugar, honey or salt
- It may take multiple tries (5 – 20) before your baby accepts a new food. Don't get discouraged!

### Choking Hazards

Do not feed children younger than four years of age round, firm food unless it is chopped completely.

**The following foods are choking hazards:**

- Nuts and seeds
- Large chunks of cheese or meat (e.g., hot dogs)
- Whole grapes, chunks of hard fruit (e.g., apples) and raw vegetables
- Peanut butter
- Ice cubes
- Raisins
- Popcorn
- Hard, gooey, or sticky candy, chewing gum

\*Never leave an infant unattended while she/he is eating.

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## Signs of Hunger

Babies should be fed whenever they show you they are hungry. Look for these signs:

- Rooting: a reflex in newborns that makes them turn their head toward a breast or bottle to feed
- Sucking on fingers or a fist
- Moving, licking or smacking of lips
- Fussing or crying
- Excited arm and leg movements

## Signs of Fullness

It's not necessary for your baby to finish a bottle or container of food. If she shows signs that she is full and there is food left, allow her to stop eating. When making a meal, offer the correct amount of food for her age and offer more only if she is still hungry and engaged in eating. Look for these signs of fullness:

- Sealing lips together, decreasing sucking, spitting out or refusing the nipple, or pushing or turning away from the breast or bottle
- Milk begins to run out of the baby's mouth

## Safety and Storage of Breast Milk

- It is best to defrost breast milk either in the refrigerator overnight, by running under warm water, or by setting in a container of warm water. Thawed breast milk should be used within 24 hours. Do not refreeze unused milk.
- If your baby doesn't finish the bottle of breast milk within one hour, throw out the rest. Bacteria from saliva can contaminate the milk and make your infant sick if he drinks it later.

### Breast Milk Storage Guidelines

Location of Storage	Maximum Recommended Storage Time
Room Temperature	3-4 hours
Refrigerator	48-72 hours
Freezer	6 months

## Safety and Storage of Formula

- Always follow label directions carefully.
- If your baby doesn't finish the bottle of formula within 1 hour, throw out the remainder. Bacteria from saliva can contaminate the formula and make your infant sick if she drinks it later.
- To prevent waste and save time, mix a large batch of formula and divide it into bottles that you can refrigerate and use throughout the day.

### Formula Storage Guidelines

Location of Storage	Maximum Recommended Storage Time
Room Temperature	2 hours
Room Temperature	1 hour if warmed
Refrigerator	24 hours

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### How Much to Feed Your Child

Understand your role and your child's role at mealtimes. Your job is to offer healthy foods at regular times; your child's job is to decide whether and how much to eat.

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH/ SUPPER	SNACK
	Serve both components	Serve all 3 components	
1. Breast Milk or Formula	4 – 8 fl oz	4 – 8 fl oz	4 – 6 fl oz
2. Fruit or Vegetable	None	0 – 3 Tbsp	None
3. Grain or Bread	0 – 3 Tbsp	0 – 3 Tbsp	None
Infant Cereal	None	None	None
Bread	None	None	None
Crackers	None	None	None

### How Much to Feed Your Baby

If breastfeeding	On demand
If iron-fortified infant formula*	4 – 8 fluid ounces per feed
Water with no added sweeteners	If desired, small amounts can be given after breast milk or iron-fortified formula

### Daily Formula Feeding Amounts by Age\*

4 through 7 months	26 – 32 fluid ounces per day
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\* Formula intake should be adequate to support appropriate weight gain as determined by the infant's doctor.

6 oz  
serving →

*Reminder: Never use a microwave to heat a bottle of breast milk or formula.*



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### Age-Appropriate Servings for Lunch/Supper: Infants Ages 4 through 7 Months

#### Grain/Bread

Infant Cereal –  
1.5 Tbsp serving shown



#### Fruit/Vegetable

1.5 Tbsp serving shown, puréed



Lunch/Supper  
shown on 8" plate.  
Add breast milk or  
formula to complete the  
meal requirements.