

BREASTFEEDING LONGER THAN SIX MONTHS

Breastfeeding your baby is a great way to make sure your baby has the best start possible.

Choose Health LA Moms has been focusing on giving you the tools, resources, and support to breastfeed for six months.

Breast milk is all your baby needs for the first six months of his or her life. Now that your baby is almost six months old, talk to your baby's doctor to see if you should add baby food to your baby's diet in addition to breast milk. **IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU CONTINUE TO BREASTFEED YOUR BABY AT LEAST UNTIL YOUR BABY'S FIRST BIRTHDAY.**

The benefits of breastfeeding your baby for at least a year include:^{1,2}

- Less diarrhea
- Fewer allergies
- Fewer earaches
- Lower risk of diabetes
- Lower risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)
- Lower risk of obesity
- Better grades in school
- Less constipation

You can breastfeed for as long as you and your baby want. Breast milk will continue to provide important vitamins and nutrients, such as iron and protein, to your baby in an easy-to-digest form. By breastfeeding for six months and longer you are giving your baby a gift that will last the rest of his or her life.

TIPS OF THE WEEK

- It is recommended that you continue to breastfeed your baby at least until your baby's first birthday.
- After six months you can talk to your doctor about adding food to your baby's diet.
- Keep up your milk supply by breastfeeding before offering other foods.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Breast milk is still the most important food in your baby's diet, so it is important to keep your milk supply up. When your baby is hungry, breastfeed first, then feed pureed fruits and vegetables and/or baby cereal.

Check with your baby's doctor before starting baby food. Here are some signs your baby is ready for food:

- having head control and able to keep head in a steady, upright position
- no longer using tongue to push food out of his mouth
- sitting upright
- swallowing efficiently
- growing to double their birth weight
- seeming hungry even after breastfeeding
- showing interest in the food you're eating

Foods your baby can eat at this age include pureed fruits and vegetables, and single-grain cereal mixed with breast milk.

When you begin feeding your baby food, he or she will probably only eat a spoonful of food in one sitting. Over time your baby will eat more. Your breast milk is still providing all the nutrients your baby needs. Introduce foods one at a time to check for allergic reactions.

Good starting foods for your baby:⁴

- pureed sweet potato (steam or boil until tender, then mash or blend)
- pureed carrots (steam or boil until tender, then mash or blend)

- banana mash (mash banana until smooth, add baby cereal and breast milk and mix into an easy-to-swallow puree)
- See this resource for more food ideas: babycenter.in/a546643/baby-food-first-tastes

Foods your baby should not have until 1 year old:⁵

- salt
- sugar
- honey
- artificial sweeteners
- low fat foods
- caffeine
- fish with high mercury levels (tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico, swordfish, shark and king mackerel⁶)

Learn more about what to feed your baby and their development milestones in the links below.

RESOURCES:

GUIDE TO FIRSTS: FEEDING YOUR BABY SOLID FOOD

babycenter.com/100_guide-to-firsts-feeding-your-baby-solid-food_10346211.bc

HOW TO TELL WHETHER YOUR BABY IS GETTING ENOUGH BREAST MILK

babycenter.com/0_how-to-tell-whether-your-babys-getting-enough-breast-milk_617.bc?page=3

AGE-BY-AGE GUIDE TO FEEDING YOUR BABY

babycenter.com/0_age-by-age-guide-to-feeding-your-baby_1400680.bc?showAll=true

INTRODUCING SOLID

babycenter.com/0_introducing-solids_113.bc?page=4

SOLID FOODS FOR 6 TO 8 MONTH OLD BABY

wholesomebabyfood.momtastic.com/solidfood6to8montholdbaby.htm

BABY FOOD BY AGE SIX MONTHS

babycenter.in/a9144/baby-food-by-age-six-months

REFERENCES

1. Weissinger D. (2000) What If I Want to Wean My Baby? <http://www.normalfed.com/Why/wean.html>.
2. "Benefits of Breastfeeding." Breastfeeding Education: A Guide for You and Your Baby. ChooseHealthLA.com and BreastfeedLA. March 2013.
3. Introducing Solids (2015). Baby Center http://www.babycenter.com/0_introducing-solids_113.bc?showAll=true
4. Baby food: First Tastes (2015). Baby Center <http://www.babycenter.in/a546643/baby-food-first-tastes>
5. An overview of starting solid foods: photos (2015). Baby Center <http://www.babycenter.in/l25006237/an-overview-of-starting-solid-foods-photos#ixzz3eBWVmMHS>
6. Mercury Levels in Fish (2015). American Pregnancy Association <http://americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-health/mercury-levels-in-fish/>