

Infant Nutrition

During your baby's first three months, breast milk or formula will provide all the nutrition he needs.

As your infant develops physically and mentally, the feeding process will evolve. There will be times during the next year — and, especially, in the first 3 months — when a growth spurt increases your baby's appetite. Continue to feed on demand and increase the number of feedings as needed.

The following are general guidelines, so your baby may be hungrier more or less often. Pay attention to his signals of being hungry or full. A baby who is getting enough might slow down, stop or turn away from the breast or bottle.

Breastfeeding

Your breastfed infant is eating enough if he:

- seems alert, content and active
- is steadily gaining weight, growing and developing
- feeds six to eight times per day
- is wetting and soiling diapers on a regular basis

Your baby might not be eating enough if he doesn't appear satisfied, even after feeding, and cries constantly or is irritable. Call your baby's doctor if you notice any of these signs.

After about a month, breastfed babies tend to have fewer bowel movements than they did before. When your child is around 2 months old, he may not have a bowel movement after each feeding, or even every day. If he hasn't had a bowel movement after three days, call your doctor.

During periods of rapid growth, your baby may want to feed more often. This frequent nursing will prompt the mother's body to increase her milk supply, and in a couple of days, supply and demand will get into balance.

Exclusively breastfed infants should get vitamin D supplements within the first few days of life, but additional supplements, water, juice and solid foods aren't usually necessary.

Formula feeding

Babies digest formula more slowly than breast milk, so if you're bottle-feeding, your baby may take fewer feedings.

As your baby grows, he will eat more, go for longer stretches between feedings and sleep for longer periods at night.

During the second month, infants may take 4 or 5 ounces at each feeding. By the end of three months, your baby will probably need an additional ounce at each feeding.

It's easier to overfeed your baby when using formula because it takes less effort to drink from a bottle than from a breast. Make sure the hole on the bottle's nipple is the right size for your baby's age. The liquid should drip slowly from the hole and not pour out. Don't force your baby to finish a bottle when he shows signs of being full.

Never use a bottle prop — it's a choking hazard. Also, don't let your baby sleep with a bottle in his mouth because it can lead to tooth decay.

Spitting up

Many infants "spit up" a little after eating or during burping. Spitting up a small amount — less than 1 ounce (30 ml) — shouldn't be a concern as long as it happens within an hour of feeding and doesn't bother the baby.

You can reduce spitting up by:

- feeding before the baby gets very hungry
- keeping the baby in a semi-upright position during the feeding and for an hour afterwards
- burping the baby regularly
- avoiding overfeeding
- not jostling or playing vigorously with the baby right after a feeding

Call your doctor if your baby is spitting up large amounts, spitting up forcefully, irritable during or after feedings, or seems to be losing weight or not gaining weight as expected.