If you have concerns about your child’s feeding, talk to their healthcare provider. There are different types of specialists who can help children with feeding issues including:

- Lactation Consultants
- Speech-Language Pathologists
- Occupational Therapists

A specialist may recommend specific feeding techniques, exercises, and foods to help with feeding. Each child will have their own unique goals and spending time working with them each day can help improve their ability to suck, chew, and swallow for a better feeding experience.

**Some Possible Signs of Feeding Issues**

- Cannot latch on to breast or bottle
- Sucks in light, quick, fluttery motions rather than taking deep, regular sucks
- Frequent spitting up and/or vomiting after feeding
- Appears hungry shortly after a feeding
- Has diarrhea or rash after feeding
- Stiff body or arching of back during a feeding
- Not following baby’s own growth curve
- Unusually short or long feedings
- Consistently rejects solid foods
- Is unable to keep food or liquid in mouth
- Difficulty chewing age appropriate food
- Does not enjoy eating a variety of foods or refuses certain food textures
- Gagging
- Coughing and/or choking while eating and/or drinking
- Frequent respiratory illnesses
### Feeding Tips

#### Appropriate Foods

- **Breast milk and/or formula**
  - Infant cereal
  - Smooth, pureed food (single ingredient only, like carrots, sweet potato, squash, apples, pear)
  - Yogurt
  - Soft, mashed foods like baked potatoes or sweet potatoes
  - Soft finger foods:
    - Mashed, hard-boiled egg yolk
    - Small pieces of pasteurized cheese
    - Soft, cooked carrots
  - Couscous, rice, & quinoa
  - Additional finger foods:
    - Scrambled egg yolk
    - Beans/legumes (lentils, black beans, pinto beans)
    - Ground meat
    - Sliced deli meat cut into small pieces
    - Strips of cheese
    - Bread, toast, crackers, & muffins
    - Cooked pasta

- **Pureed foods**
  - Soft, thick foods like applesauce
  - Smooth, pureed food with a thick liquid consistency
  - Make sure food is the right consistency for your baby

- **Yogurt**
  - Plain yogurt without added sugar or preservatives

- **Solid foods**
  - Soft, mashed foods like applesauce
  - Small pieces of pasteurized cheese
  - Soft, cooked carrots
  - Yogurt
  - Small pieces of fruit
  - Bread, toast, crackers, & muffins

#### Feeding Milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0-3 Months AND Newborn</th>
<th>4-6 Months AND Supported Sitter</th>
<th>7-9 Months AND Crawler/Independent Sitter</th>
<th>10-12 Months AND Beginning Walker</th>
<th>12+ Months AND Independent Walker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latches onto nipple or bottle</td>
<td>Opens mouth as spoon approaches</td>
<td>Opens mouth as spoon approaches</td>
<td>Begins to eat finger foods</td>
<td>Can use open cup independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongue moves forward and back to suck</td>
<td>Moves pureed food from front of mouth to back</td>
<td>Moves pureed food from front of mouth to back</td>
<td>Begins to eat thicker purees and pureed foods</td>
<td>Should be able to eat most foods with utensils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks 2 to 6 oz. of liquid per feeding</td>
<td>Begins to eat thicker purees and pureed foods</td>
<td>Begins to eat thicker purees and pureed foods</td>
<td>Begins to eat solid food</td>
<td>Should be able to eat most foods with utensils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast milk</td>
<td>Breast milk and/or formula</td>
<td>Pureed foods</td>
<td>Complementary foods</td>
<td>Baby can eat most foods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Feeding Suggestions

- **When first introducing thicker purees and thicker pureed foods**
  - Slow and watch your baby
  - Alternate giving baby a solid food and pureed food
  - Try offering solids with breast milk/formula

- **Vary the consistency of solids**
  - Start with thick liquids and move to thinner purees

- **Majority of baby's nutrition should still come from breast milk or formula**

- **Encourage self-feeding**
  - Use chop option on food processor to serve baby the same meal you are eating at an appropriate consistency

- **Alternate giving baby a straw to drink from and helping baby with an open cup**

- **Use chop option on food processor to serve baby the same meal you are eating at an appropriate consistency or mash with fork**

- **Serve snacks at consistent times so baby is hungry for meals**

- **Try alternating feeding baby with spoon and letting them try to feed themselves**

- **Eating an increasing variety of food**

- **Begins to use an open cup independently**

- **Should be able to eat most foods by 1 year and participate in family meals**

- **Might be ready to start self-feeding with utensils**

- **Can use open cup independently**

### Common Choking Hazards

- Hot dogs
- Nuts
- Whole grapes
- Popcorn
- Hard, sticky, gooey candy

Please visit [www.Pathways.org](http://www.Pathways.org) to find more FREE resources on child development.

*Remember to correct your child's age for prematurity.*