

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

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.

An Introduction to Feeding Development



Pathways.org empowers parents and health professionals with FREE tools and resources to maximize a child's motor, sensory, and communication development.



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FREE tools to maximize child development

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Feeding Milestones

Appropriate Foods

Feeding Tips

0-3 Months AND Newborn

- Latches onto nipple or bottle
- Tongue moves forward and back to suck
- Drinks 2 to 6 oz. of liquid per feeding, 6x per day
- Sucks and swallows well during feeding

- Breast milk and/or formula

- A newborn's digestive tract and control of muscles of the mouth are still developing, so they should not be eating any solid foods
- Babies often explore items by putting them in their mouth. Be aware of choking hazards.

4-6 Months AND Supported Sitter

- Shows interest in food
- Opens mouth as spoon approaches
- Moves pureed food from front of mouth to back
- Begins to eat infant cereals and pureed foods

- Breast milk and/or formula
- Infant cereal
- Smooth, pureed food (single ingredient only), like carrots, sweet potato, squash, apples, pears

- Homemade purees should have a thick liquid consistency
- Make batches of homemade purees and freeze in ice cube trays. Thaw purees before feeding to your baby.
- Introduce baby to one new food at a time (every 3 days)
- When transitioning to solids, try starting and ending the meal with milk/formula
- Having a stronger core and more control over their neck and head movement is important for introducing solids

7-9 Months AND Crawler/Independent Sitter

- In a highchair, holds and drinks from bottle
- Begins to eat thicker pureed and mashed table foods
- Enjoys chew toys that can massage sore and swollen gums during teething
- Stays full longer after eating
- Starts to look and reach for objects, such as food that is nearby
- Shows strong reaction to new smells and tastes

- Breast milk and/or formula
- Pureed foods
- Yogurt
- Soft, mashed foods like baked potatoes or sweet potatoes
- Soft finger foods like:
 - Mashed, hardboiled egg yolk
 - Small pieces of ripe banana
 - Small pieces of pasteurized cheese
 - Soft breads
 - Soft, cooked carrots

- When first introducing thicker purees, mix with a thin puree
- Vary thinner purees and thicker purees
- Majority of baby's nutrition should still come from breast milk or formula
- Allow your child to play with food and get messy
- Don't feed baby foods with added salt and preservatives
- Alternate giving baby a straw to drink from and helping baby with an open cup
- Try alternating feeding baby with spoon and letting them try to feed themselves

10-12 Months AND Beginning Walker

- Finger feeds self
- Eating an increasing variety of food
- Begins to use an open cup
- Ready to try soft-cooked vegetables, soft fruits, and finger foods
- Might be ready to start self-feeding with utensils
- Enjoys a greater variety of smells and tastes

- Breast milk and/or formula
- 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

- Baby should be eating 3 meals per day plus several healthy snacks
- 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
- Eat together at the table during mealtimes

12+ Months AND Independent Walker

- Can use open cup independently
- Should be able to eat most foods by 1 year and participate in family mealtime
- Increases variety of chopped table foods

- With pediatrician's approval, milk is typically introduced at 1 year old
- Fruit cut into small cubes or strips
- Bite-sized, soft, cooked vegetables like zucchini or broccoli
- Mixed food textures: macaroni and cheese, casseroles
- Finger foods like:
 - Small pieces of bread/bagel
 - Shredded or small pieces of meat/tofu
 - Low sugar cereal
 - Soft fish

- Encourage self-feeding with utensils
- Remember that your job is to provide healthy, safe food options to your baby and your baby is in charge of how much to eat
- Common choking hazards:
 - Hot dogs
 - Nuts
 - Whole grapes
 - Popcorn
 - Hard, sticky, gooey candy

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

Please visit www.Pathways.org to find more FREE resources on child development.