

# Display: Feeding Babies Age 6 - 12 Months

## Suggested display set-up

### Before you feed your baby solid foods

Until 6 months, your baby only needs breastmilk and a vitamin D supplement.

After starting solids, continue to breastfeed or provide breastmilk to 2 years and beyond, for as long as mom and child wish to continue.

If your baby is not exclusively receiving breastmilk, offer a store-bought infant formula until 9-12 months.



## Feeding Babies Age 6 - 12 Months

Developed by Population Health Registered Dietitians



### Is your baby ready for solid foods?

At about 6 months, your baby is ready for solid foods if they:

- ✓ have good head and neck control,
- ✓ can sit up and lean forward, and
- ✓ open their mouth wide for food.

### Your baby knows how much to eat

Start with small amounts of food.

If your baby is hungry, they will open their mouth for food.

When your baby is full, they will close their mouth, turn their head, or push food away.

### Your baby can use an open cup

At 6 months, you can offer your baby small sips of water from an open cup.

#### What about cow's milk?

Wait to offer cow's milk until your baby is 9 - 12 months old and is eating iron-rich foods daily.

You can offer milk in an open cup at meal or snack times.



### Iron-rich foods are important

From about 6 months, your baby needs more iron.

Start by offering soft or mashed iron-rich foods two or more times each day. Iron-rich foods include:

- ✓ cooked meat, poultry and fish
- ✓ cooked egg, lentils, beans and tofu
- ✓ iron-fortified cereals



Once your baby is eating iron-rich foods daily, you can offer a variety of other nutritious foods.

### Spoon or self-feeding? You can try both

You can offer soft finger foods and let your baby try to feed themselves.

You can also offer food by spoon.

Offer a variety of textures. Food should be moist and soft.

You can use a fork to mash food; no special tools are required. Your baby's food does not need to be pureed.

Modify or avoid choking hazards, like grapes, carrots, nuts, and sausage.



### Eating together helps your baby learn

Eat with your baby and share the same foods, when possible.

Even if your baby does not always eat much, they learn from you and by interacting with family foods.

Learning to eat is a process. It's messy!

At their own pace, your baby will learn to enjoy a variety of family foods.



### What about foods that can cause allergy?

At about 6 months, introduce the foods that commonly cause food allergy, one at a time:

- ✓ Egg
- ✓ Seafood
- ✓ Wheat
- ✓ Peanut\*
- ✓ Soy
- ✓ Cheese, yogurt
- ✓ Sesame
- ✓ Tree nuts\*



\*For a safe texture, mix nut butter into applesauce or cereal.

If you are concerned that a food is causing an allergic reaction, stop giving the food and talk to your baby's doctor. Continue to offer other new foods.

## Recommended client resources to accompany display:

- Vitamin D for Breastfed Infants and Toddlers in Northern BC (NH Document Source # [10-421-6020](#))
- Before You Feed Your Baby Solid Foods (NH Document Source # [10-421-6060](#))
- Feeding Babies Age 6-12 Months (NH Document Source # [10-421-6061](#))
- Reducing risk of food allergy in your baby ([HealthLink BC](#))
- Hello Cup...Bye-Bye Bottle (NH Document Source # [10-402-6027](#))
- Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC (NH Document Source # [1997](#))



## Feeding Babies Age 6 – 12 Months Backgrounder

The Population Health Nutrition team created this display in response to common questions about feeding babies age six to 12 months.

Key feeding recommendations are highlighted in the display posters and recommended client resources. This information aligns with recommendations in the NH [Infant Toddler Nutrition Guidelines for Health Professionals](#) (Document Source # 1946), and the PHSA [Pediatric Nutrition Guidelines \(Six Months to Six Years\) for Health Professionals](#).

### Key messages

- Vitamin D supplementation is recommended for all infants receiving any amount of breastmilk.
- Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended until babies are about six months old *and* show signs of readiness for solid foods.
- First foods should be iron-rich, such as meat, kidney beans, lentils, and iron-fortified cereals.
- Common food allergens can be introduced at about six months.
- An open cup can be introduced starting at six months, for sips of water. Infants do not need juice.
- Babies benefit from being included in family meal and snack times.
- The Division of Responsibility in Feeding supports adult leadership in feeding, while trusting that infants will eat the amounts they need and will (eventually) learn to enjoy a variety of family foods.

### Suggestions for supporting parents and caregivers

- Ask feeding questions: “How is feeding going?” or “What questions do you have about starting solid foods?”
- Invite parents and caregivers to peruse the display and encourage them to take client handouts.
- Discuss the Division of Responsibility in Feeding. For children six to 12 months, the adult is responsible for deciding *what* to feed and, by working towards a predictable meal and snack routine, is beginning to take responsibility for the *when* and *where* of feeding. The child is always responsible for *how much* to eat and *whether* to eat at particular meal or snack times.
- It may be helpful for parents and caregivers to know that they can simply offer texturally modified foods from the family meal. Despite this, if clients are interested in recipes for their infants, they can be directed to resources available at HealthLink BC: “[Recipes for Your Baby \(6 to 9 Months Old\)](#)”, “[Recipes for Your Baby \(9-12 Months Old\)](#)”, and “[Finger Foods for Babies 6 - 12 Months](#).”
- For clients with concerns about their child’s risk for food allergy, refer to the HealthLink BC handout, “Reducing risk of food allergy in your baby”. If clients are concerned that their child may have had an allergic reaction to a food, advise them to stop offering that specific food and to seek medical assessment (i.e. a diagnosis). Advise them that they can continue to offer other new foods.
- If appropriate, consider a referral to an NH clinical dietitian in your area or to Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC (dial 811 or 604-215-8110).

Questions about these resources?

NH staff can connect with the Population Health Nutrition team at [PopHthNutrition@northernhealth.ca](mailto:PopHthNutrition@northernhealth.ca) or 250-631-4236.