

## The First 6 Months

Human milk is the most desirable complete diet for infants during the first 6 months. A healthy term infant receiving breast milk from a well-nourished mother usually requires no specific vitamin and mineral supplements with a few exceptions. Daily supplements of vitamin D and vitamin B<sub>12</sub> may be indicated if the mother's intake of these vitamins is inadequate. The American Academy of Pediatrics ([Wagner, Greer, American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Breastfeeding, et al, 2008](#)) recommends that all infants (including those exclusively breastfed) receive a daily supplement of 400 IU of vitamin D beginning in the first few days of life to prevent rickets and vitamin D deficiency. Vitamin D supplementation should occur until the infant is consuming at least 1 L/day (or 1 qt/day) of vitamin D–fortified formula ([Wagner, Greer, American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Breastfeeding, et al, 2008](#)). Non-breastfed infants who are taking less than 1 L/day of vitamin D–fortified formula should also receive a daily vitamin D supplement of 400 IU (see [Safety Alert](#)). If the infant is being exclusively breastfed after 4 months old (when fetal iron stores are depleted), iron supplementation (1 mg/kg/day) is recommended until appropriate iron-containing complementary foods (such as, iron-fortified cereal) are introduced ([Baker, Greer, and American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Nutrition, 2010](#)) (see [Community Focus](#) box). Infants, whether breastfed or bottle fed, do not require additional fluids, especially water or juice, during the first 4 months of life. Excessive intake of water in infants may result in water intoxication and hyponatremia.

### Community Focus

#### Administration of Iron Supplements

- Ideally, iron supplements should be administered between meals for greater absorption.
- Liquid iron supplements may stain the teeth; therefore, administer them with a dropper toward the back of the mouth (side). In older children, administer liquid iron supplements