



Breastfeeding Mealtime Milestones

Breastfeeding throughout the first year includes many important mealtime milestones. Here's what you can expect.



First Week

Catching On to Latching On

During the first week, focus on making sure your baby knows how to latch on (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Ensuring-Proper-Latch-On.aspx>) correctly. This not only helps avoid sore, cracked, or blistered nipples, but ensures that your body will get the message to make more milk and cause your full milk supply (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Milk-Supply.aspx>) to come in.

2 Weeks–2 Months

Keeping Up With Supply and Demand

A lot of changes take place over the first couple of months, not the least of which will include an impressive amount of growth and development, sleeping longer (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Sleeping-Through-the-Night.aspx>) stretches during the night, and settling into more of a predictable breastfeeding routine (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Establishing-a-Breastfeeding-Routine.aspx>). Along with these changes, be prepared for growth spurts that will inevitably result in your baby's increased demand for more milk.

4–6 Months

Preparing for Firsts

Most notably first foods (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Working-Together-Breastfeeding-and-Solid-Foods.aspx>) and first teeth (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/When-Your-Baby-Gets-Teeth.aspx>), that is. Rest assured that babies don't need teeth to start solid foods, and it's entirely possible to continue breastfeeding babies comfortably even once teeth enter the picture! With the introduction of solid foods recommended at about 6 months*, now's the time to add some baby cereal (</English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Cereal-in-a-Bottle-Solid-Food-Shortcuts-to-Avoid.aspx>) (which you're welcome to mix with breast milk) along with pureed meats, fruits, and veggies to your baby's mealtime menu. And while some babies hold off on first teeth until 9 to 12 months or even longer, this is also the time when you may start to see the first signs of front teeth popping through.

*Note: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding as the sole source of nutrition for your baby for about 6 months. When you add solid foods to your baby's diet, continue breastfeeding until at least 12 months. You can continue to breastfeed after 12 months if you and your baby desire. Check with your child's doctor about vitamin D and iron supplements during the first year.

9 Months

Distracted Dining

Nine-month-olds are notoriously inquisitive. With a newly developing interest in the world around them, you may find that your child is more easily distracted and seems more frequently disinterested in breastfeeding. Don't let this discourage you, but rather treat it as a temporary developmental bump in the road that may simply require you to breastfeed in a dedicated, quieter place with fewer distractions.

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