



## Baby's First Month: Feeding and Nutrition

Your new baby's nutritional needs are greater than at any other time in their life. Feeding your infant provides more than just good nutrition, though. It also allows you to hold your newborn close, cuddle, and make eye contact. These are relaxing and enjoyable moments for you both, bringing you closer together.

Because of its nutritional composition and health-promoting properties, breast milk (also referred to as human milk) is the ideal food for human infants. With support, most women are able to successfully breastfeed their babies. If you are unable to breastfeed, infant formula is an acceptable and nutritious alternative to breast milk.



Breastmilk or formula should be your child's sole nutritional source for the first six months. When you add solid foods to your baby's diet, continue breastfeeding until at least 12 months or longer.

During this time, you and your pediatrician will need to pay attention to her pattern of feedings and make sure that she's getting enough for growth. (See, "[How Often and How Much Should Your Baby Eat?](\"/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/how-often-and-how-much-should-your-baby-eat.aspx\")") Regular checkups ([/English/ages-stages/Your-Childs-Checkups/Pages/default.aspx](\"/English/ages-stages/Your-Childs-Checkups/Pages/default.aspx\")) and monitoring of growth is the best way to ensure this.

## Getting to know your baby's feeding patterns

Each baby has a particular style of feeding. Years ago researchers at Yale University playfully attached names to five common eating patterns. See if you recognize your baby's dining behavior among them.

- **Barracudas** get right down to business. As soon as they're put to the breast, they grasp the areola and suck energetically for ten to twenty minutes. They usually become less eager as time goes on.
- **Excited ineffectives** nursers become frantic at the sight of the breast. In a frenzied cycle they grasp it, lose it, and start screaming in frustration. They must be calmed down several times during each feeding. The key to nourishing this type of baby is to feed them as soon as they wake up, before they get desperately hungry. Also, if the milk tends to spray from the breast as the baby struggles, it may help to manually express a few drops first to slow the stream.
- **Procrastinators** can't be bothered with nursing until the milk supply increases, commonly referred to as "coming in." These babies shouldn't be given bottles of water or formula, as feeding them bottles may make it more difficult to get them to nurse at the breast. You should continue to put them to the breast regularly, whenever they appear alert or make mouthing movements.
- **Reluctant nursers** sometimes benefit from being placed naked on the reclining mother's bare abdomen and chest for a period of time. They may spontaneously move toward the breast, or they can be placed on the breast after a time. You may find advice on improved positioning and attachment from a lactation specialist helpful. For a baby who resists nursing for the first few days, you can use an electric pump between feedings to stimulate milk production. Just don't give up! Contact your pediatrician's office for assistance or referral to a lactation specialist.

**Ourmets** or mouthers insist on playing with the nipple, tasting the milk first and smacking their lips before latching in. If hurried or prodded, they become furious and scream in protest. The best solution is tolerance. After a few minutes of playing, they do settle down and nurse well. Just be sure the lips and gums are on the areola and

not on the nipple.

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- **Resters** prefer to nurse for a few minutes, rest a few minutes, and resume nursing. Some fall asleep on the breast, nap for half an hour or so, and then awaken ready for dessert. This pattern can be confusing, but these babies cannot be hurried. The solution? It's best just to schedule extra time for feedings and remain as flexible as possible.

## Remember

Learning your own baby's eating patterns is one of your biggest challenges in the weeks after delivery. Once you understand their patterns, you'll find it much easier to determine when they are hungry, when they have had enough, how often they need to eat, and how much time is required for feedings. It is generally best to initiate a feeding at the earliest signs of hunger, before the baby cries. Babies also have unique positions that they prefer.

Talk with your pediatrician if you have any questions or concerns about your baby's feeding and nutritional need.

## More information

- [How Often and How Much Should Your Baby Eat? \(/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/how-often-and-how-much-should-your-baby-eat.aspx\)](#)
- [How to Tell if Your Breastfed Baby is Getting Enough Milk \(/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/How-to-Tell-if-Baby-is-Getting-Enough-Milk.aspx\)](#)
- [Your Child's Checkups \(/English/ages-stages/Your-Childs-Checkups/Pages/default.aspx\)](#)

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