

Newborn Nutritional Guidance

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WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION:

Remember that good nutrition is needed for proper growth. If your child is not gaining weight or is above 95% on the growth chart, discuss this with your Osteopathic Family Physician. In case of any emergency, you should call your doctor or 911 right away.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BIRTH TO 12 MONTHS:

The World Health Organization and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend only breastfeeding for the first six months of life for optimal health and development. Feeding amounts can change in the first days of life; if breastfeeding, you should expect to feed 8-12 times every 24 hours, which averages to a feeding every 2-3 hours. The usual recommendation is 15-20 minutes on each breast each time that your baby feeds.

Many new mothers choose to formula feed, and whichever you choose, the best baby is a fed baby! If formula feeding, you should feed approximately 20 oz. per day after the first few days, which means feedings of 2-3 oz. every 2-3 hours. Formula intake should increase from 24 oz. per day at 1 month of age to 30-32 oz. per day by 4 months of age. All brands of formula provide adequate nutrition, so no brand is better than another.

Signs of hunger in a baby (which can be applied to formula fed babies as well) include tongue sucking, hands in mouth and rooting reflex. Look for these signs before feeding your baby and continue to check for fullness as you are feeding.

Begin nutritious solid foods between 4 and 6 months of age. Look for your baby's ability to control their neck and head movements as well as interest in starting foods. You may choose to start with a simple cereal, but a gradual introduction of a variety of foods, flavors, and textures is recommended. Try adding fruits and vegetables first, including applesauce, avocado, sweet potato, carrots, peas, beans, etc. By 8 to 10 months, you should aim to feed your baby mashed versions of the same foods you would feed yourself or older children, and coordinate a feeding schedule that corresponds with family mealtimes. Feed your baby only when hungry and stick to portions of 2-3 tablespoons. Never force-feed your baby. Remember that in the first year of life the majority of calories still comes from mom's milk or formula.

WHAT TO AVOID AND WHAT TO SUPPLEMENT:

Many medications (including drugs and alcohol) can be passed in breast milk. If you choose to drink alcohol, you should limit what you drink and breastfeed at least two hours after the last drink.

If you take medications, the online resource LactMed will provide information about safety of use in breastfeeding moms. *LactMed: toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/newtoxnet/lactmed.htm*

Breast milk provides enough calories, protein, fat, and every essential vitamin except Vitamin D. If you are exclusively breastfeeding, your physician will prescribe a Vitamin D supplement to give your newborn. Avoid cow's milk until 12 months of age, because it does not contain the recommended nutrition for proper growth and development. Avoid honey for the first year of life, due to an increased risk of botulism.

SOURCE(S): American Academy of Pediatrics(AAP): healthychildren.org, LactMed, World Health Organization(WHO).

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