

## **FEEDING SUGGESTIONS**

There is considerable variation in the amount of food that an individual baby will need. If given the opportunity, a normal baby will take as much milk as he requires for growth and development. Never, under any circumstances, force a baby to eat or finish a bottle. Never use a bottle to pacify a baby (other needs cause a baby to cry and putting a bottle in a baby's mouth will console him as the sucking soothes him, leading you to the belief that he is hungry, while all he needs is to suck).

Whether your infant is breast or bottle fed, the amount of milk needed for a 24 hour period is determined as follows:

- Is the infant content on a 2 ½ to 4 hour demand feeding schedule?
- Is he/she growing at the expected rate? If so, his intake is adequate.

The Committee on Nutrition of the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all infants remain on an iron-containing formula or breast milk for the first year of life. When breast feeding is stopped before one year of age, the best alternative for meeting nutritional requirements is provided by an infant formula containing iron.

If you are nursing your infant, you should continue to take your pre-natal vitamins each day and your baby should be receiving vitamin drops daily. If you are feeding your baby iron containing formula (milk or soy-based) your infant receives all the vitamins he needs. Most of the drinking water (city and well) in Northwest Ohio contains sufficient natural or added fluoride. For those infants who are formula fed using bottled water or ready to feed formula, we will prescribe a fluoride containing vitamin beginning at six months of age.

Most of your baby's water needs are met by breast milk or formula. However, you may offer water between feedings especially during hot weather starting at six months of age.

There is **no** evidence that introducing solid foods will guarantee that your baby will sleep through the night. In fact, early solids started before four months of age will lead to constipation, choking, poor nutrition and food allergies. We recommend starting solids after four months of age or when your baby meets **all** of the following criteria:

- Consistently taking more than 40 ounces of formula a day.
- At least 13 pounds.
- Doubled their birth weight.

Rice cereal is one of the easiest foods for a baby to digest. You may start with one tablespoon of cereal and enough formula or expressed breast milk to make it soupy. Feed this to your baby with a spoon. **NEVER** put it in the bottle or use an infant feeder. The amount and the frequency of cereal may vary as the baby desires, but never allow solid intake to decrease child's intake of milk significantly.

Some foods produce allergies and for that reason you should introduce only one new food at a time, in small amounts, and for a period of three to five days. We advise avoiding wheat, corn, eggs or meat until six months of age and citrus (orange juice) until nine months of age.

After starting cereal, how you proceed to add additional foods can be varied or a typical schedule might be as follows:

<b>AVERAGE AGE</b>	<b>TYPE OF FOOD</b>
<b>4 months</b>	<b>Precooked cereals: rice then oatmeal</b>
<b>5 months</b>	<b>Strained single fruits: applesauce, pears, bananas, apricots, peaches</b>
<b>6 months</b>	<b>Strained yellow vegetables: carrots, squash, sweet potatoes</b>
<b>7 months</b>	<b>Strained green vegetables and single meats</b>
<b>9 months</b>	<b>Egg yolk and dinners</b>

Six months of age is a good time to start teaching your baby to drink from a cup to prepare him/her for weaning at one year of age. Put breast milk or your infant formula in your child's cup. Infants do not need juice.

By nine months, your baby may start to take junior foods and a few table foods that are mashed well or fun through a baby food grinder or blender. Before starting finger foods be sure child has eight teeth and chews wells.

By one year of age, the baby may take mostly table foods and is ready to be weaned from the bottle or breast. Prolonged bottle or breast feeding especially at night, will increase dental cavities. Remember that your child's appetite will decrease drastically over the next year because the rate of growth is not as rapid. Your job as a parent is to offer nutritious food. If your child is hungry, he will eat; if not, no amount of forcing or worry will change things.

At one year of age you should start your child on either whole or 2% milk.

Vitamins are not usually necessary after one year of age if your child is eating well. Fruit juice is not recommended in the first year of life. It is empty calories and is not required for children. In fact, it can encourage poor nutrition and is the most common cause of diarrhea in healthy infants and children in the U.S. Juice intake is also associated with childhood obesity. If used at all, limit your child to only 2 ounces at most per day no matter what your child's age.