During these weeks and months of rapid skill-building and development, your baby will become much more accomplished at sitting in the high chair, showing good hand-mouth coordination, having an increasingly more accurate grasp, and developing chewing abilities. At seven months, these skills are probably just beginning. But the majority of babies will have most of these abilities by ten months.

FEEDING YOUR SEVEN-MONTH-OLD

Your baby is changing from eating on a hunger/demand schedule to one that fits more closely with the family eating pattern. Eating is becoming more of a social event. The texture and beauty of food fascinates your baby—“exploration” is important to her development, but it will be messy. Offer soft pieces of food on the high chair tray, but maybe only as much as you are willing to pick up off of the floor!

Your baby’s digestive system is also maturing. Around the age of seven months, babies have an increased ability to digest varied foods. This fits nicely with his increased skills—he is physically able to tolerate those foods he is developmentally able to get into his mouth and eat. He is truly in a time of transition, and the challenge is recognizing his changing abilities and keeping up with them!

By now, the infant iron-fortified cereal you offer your baby is thicker and lumpier, and she will be attempting to “chew” and manipulate the food. When you see this, you will know to offer her fork-mashed cooked or even diced vegetables and fruits. Although baby foods are nutritious, they do not challenge your baby’s eating skills. Your baby is growing in many ways, and the texture, size, shape, and “bite” of her food will challenge her motor skills. She will be fascinated by the “newness” of food as she moves from smooth to thick, to lumpy, to firm, and eventually, as a toddler, to chewy and crisp!

Does your baby “clam up” when you try to feed him? He’s not being stubborn—he’d like to try it himself! Again, be sure the food is small, soft, and mashed up, but let him try. A note of caution, however: meat does not gum well and can cause choking. If a baby is still nursing or taking formula, the protein from meat is not as essential as it will be when he moves to table food.
WHEAT PRODUCTS

At seven months, your baby is probably ready to be introduced to wheat products, unless there is a history of a wheat allergy in your family. If there is a wheat allergy in your family, talk with your physician about introducing these products. Once your baby is comfortable with wheat foods, you can offer pieces of crackers, small cubes of soft bread, and a variety of cereals for her to pick up and eat. Even noodles and macaroni make great finger foods and will help your baby move toward table food.

At this age, some parents decide to work toward weaning from breast or bottle feedings, especially if the baby is active and interested in a sippy cup. He still needs breast milk or formula until he’s a year old, but you may want to serve it in a sippy cup at mealtime and decrease breast or bottle-feedings throughout the day. Often, breast or bottle-feeding is enjoyable at bedtime as it allows for continued bonding between the baby and the caregiver.

References:

All children grow, learn, and develop at different rates. The information in this brochure is considered typical for children of this age. If you do all you can to help children grow and develop now, they will have the best chance to do well in school and in life.

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