

ABCs OF Growing Healthy KIDS: SIX-MONTH-OLD



Your baby is very interested in the world around him. The reaching and grasping that your baby has been doing in the past few months will be perfected in the coming weeks. Soon your baby will not only pick up a nearby rattle, but will shake it on purpose. And, along with your baby's growing body, his personality is growing too!

FEEDING YOUR SIX-MONTH-OLD

Your six-month-old baby is starting to eat solid foods and appears to be interested in food and family at mealtime. After your baby is comfortable with iron-fortified baby cereal, begin adding fruits and vegetables to his diet. Some pediatricians recommend beginning with vegetables to be sure these flavors are well accepted before the sweeter fruits are introduced. The main goal in adding vegetables and fruits is to gradually shift your baby's primary source of vitamins A and C to solid foods and, eventually, away from formula or breast milk.

SIX TO EIGHT MONTHS

- Strained or mashed vegetables
- Strained or mashed fruits

Enjoy the bewildered look of amazement when your baby first tastes vegetables. You may want to start with pureed fresh or frozen cooked vegetables, or you may decide to buy commercial baby food. If you do prepare your own baby food, remember that your baby's excitement in the food comes from the food itself—there is no need to season your baby's food. Avoid pureeing canned vegetables because they have high levels of sodium and/or salt. Babies don't need salt, and it is difficult for their bodies to break down.



WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE A SIX-MONTH-OLD?

- I can roll from my back to my stomach.
- I can sit with little support.
- I look around when I hear sounds.
- I'm beginning to understand some words by your tone of voice.
- I babble and squeal and listen to my own voice.
- I can reach for things and put them in my mouth.

Remember to introduce new vegetables and fruits one at a time to be sure they are tolerated. For this reason, mixed foods—like mixed cereals, mixed vegetables, baby casserole, or dessert items—need to wait until your baby has tried each ingredient individually.

In 2017, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) made the first change in juice recommendations for children since 2001. Because fruit juice doesn't provide any nutritional benefits over whole fruits and whole fruits are rich in fiber and other nutrients not found in juice, AAP recommends that fruit juice not be offered to children under the age of one year. Even 100% fruit juice contains a concentrated source of calories and can increase the risk of excessive weight gain and tooth decay.

Your baby's food patterns are starting to resemble those of older family members. He eats cereal at one or two feedings each day and works to pick up small pieces of soft, "gummable" foods offered—probably vegetables separated from the family's meal before seasoning or rice or oat cereals. Has your baby joined the family at mealtime yet? He will benefit so much from the social aspect of your meals, and in turn, will provide meal-time entertainment for your family.

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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