



Healthy Families Homebirth

Cheryl Furer, CPM, RM, CHom
600 S. Airport Road, Suite G.
Longmont, CO 80503
cheryl.furer@msn.com
Phone: 303-718-1554
Fax: 720-600-4386
www.healthyfamilieshomebirth.com

Feeding a Healthy Baby

“Babies who are ready for solids can usually feed themselves. Mothers often report that they knew their babies were ready when they picked up food from a plate, chewed it, swallowed it, and wanted more” Le Leche League website.

Signs of maturity that an infant is ready to eat foods other than breastmilk:

- Weight has at least doubled since birth
- Infant is greater than 6 months old
- Baby is healthy without any rashes
- Infant can hold up head and neck and can sit up with or without support
- The infant will reach for foods and reacts with interest to sights, sounds, and smells of cooking
- The infant can grasp objects with his finger and thumb
- The infant doesn't push foods out with his tongue. (This is a natural reflex that helps prevent choking in young infants.)
- The infant is able to turn his head away from foods being offered.

When starting foods consider the following;

- Start with single foods without any salt, sugar or spices added to them. That way if your infant is allergic to that food you will be able to know right away.
- Use steamed, pureed vegetables as first foods. Vegetables and fruits have the lowest risk of allergies and are easy to prepare. Cereals are also a common first food. Mashed/pureed avocado, bananas, and sweet potatoes are highly nutritious for a first food.
- Feed the infant until he/she is done; not necessarily when the bowl is empty. This helps the infant to decide when he or she is full.
- Use small, soft-tipped spoons, unbreakable plates and bowls, and plastic bibs to help with clean up. Place a plastic cover on the floor for protection.
- Give the child a spoon so that he/she can practice holding it. In many cultures, first foods are given from the clean hands of a parent. I've used this technique when the infant was unwilling to take food via the spoon. He readily ate the small amounts from my clean fingers.
- Try new foods early in the day. That way if the infant has a negative reaction or allergy you can take care of him in the afternoon rather than in the middle of the night.



Healthy Families Homebirth

Cheryl Furer, CPM, RM, CHom
600 S. Airport Road, Suite G.
Longmont, CO 80503
cheryl.furer@msn.com
Phone: 303-718-1554
Fax: 720-600-4386
www.healthyfamilieshomebirth.com

Remember that infants will give you signs that they are hungry. Expecting an infant to sit down to eat a meal 3 times a day may not be realistic. Nursing throughout the day with food offered when you sit down to eat may be the best for both of you.

Feeding don'ts:

- Don't give the infant juice in a bottle or sippy cup for the day. This will reduce the amount of calories that the child eats in nutritious foods. It can also promote tooth decay. Breastmilk can be given during the day. Juice should be given only during meal time.
- **CHOKING HAZARDS!** Beware of any foods that are larger than your infant's fingernail or that doesn't dissolve instantly in the mouth. Mash up foods before giving them to baby. Common choking foods are: hog dogs, grapes, carrots, and hard candy.
- Don't worry if your child doesn't finish everything on the plate/bowl. Infants know when they are done eating. They regulate their breastmilk intake when on the breast also.
- Don't try new foods when your infant is tired or cranky. Make food time fun for you and him/her.
- Don't feed babies in a reclining sit or leaning back, as this could increase the risk of choking.
- In the first year avoid cow's milk, honey, citrus, popcorn, and peanut butter (there is some debate about peanut butter).

Be patient. Just like breastfeeding your child is learning something new. Textures and smells are all a new experience. If your infant doesn't like something one day, then try it again a few days later.

Additional resources:

<http://www.llli.org/faq/solids.html>

<http://wholesomebabyfood.momtastic.com/babyfirstfoods.htm>

References:

Shaw, G. (2011, October 15). Baby Food: Introducing Solid Foods. *WebMD*. Retrieved October 28, 2012, from <http://www.webmd.com/parenting/baby/baby-food-nutrition-9/starting-solid-food>

Staff, M. C. (2011, June 17). Solid foods: How to get your baby started. *Mayo Clinic*. Retrieved October 28, 2012, from <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/healthy-baby/PR00029>



Healthy Families Homebirth

Cheryl Furer, CPM, RM, CHom
600 S. Airport Road, Suite G.
Longmont, CO 80503
cheryl.furer@msn.com
Phone: 303-718-1554
Fax: 720-600-4386

www.healthyfamilieshomebirth.com

When should my baby start solids? (2011, January 24). *LLLI*. Retrieved October 28, 2012, from <http://www.llli.org/faq/solids.html>