

# FEEDING YOUR 9 MONTH OLD



**BREAKFAST**



**LUNCH**



**DINNER**

### STAFF NOTES

# SMART CHOICES FOR FEEDING A 9 MONTH OLD

## Why Is This Important?

- Many parents worry they are not feeding their baby enough food. But serving sizes for infants are much smaller than for adults.
- It is hard to know how much to feed a baby. It is important to remind parents that their baby may eat more or less than this depending on their age, gender and feeding patterns.

## Nutritional Information

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- Serving sizes for infants are very small. A serving of veggies is only 1 Tablespoon.

## Transition to finger foods

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- By around 9 months, your baby might enjoy many soft, solid foods. This transition to finger foods is an exciting and fun time for parents and babies! However, there are many important things to keep in mind during this time:
  - Soft foods include infant cereal, soft fruits and cooked vegetables, and strained meats.
  - Cut soft foods into small, baby-bite size pieces, no larger than one-half inch, to prevent choking.
  - Your baby does not need much solid food. Start with 1 Tablespoon of each type of food, each time you feed your baby. This will also help you to avoid wasting food.
  - Remember your baby still needs formula and/or breast milk through the first year.
  - Also, continue to offer infant cereal during this time to ensure your baby gets important minerals and vitamins necessary to grow healthy.
- Don't forget to keep offering a variety of foods including fruits and vegetables. Too often during this time healthy foods are replaced by unhealthy snack items like French fries, chips, and other non-nutritious items.

## Introducing New Foods

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- Did you know a child might need to try a new food 10-15 times over several months before accepting a new flavor, food or texture?
- Don't give up! The more flavors and textures babies try and taste in their first year the more likely they will be to eat a variety of foods as they grow.

## Establishing Meal Time Routines

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- Now is a great time to begin enjoying family meals. When possible, include your baby in family mealtime including customs and manners.
- Remember it is important for babies to see you eat healthy foods and use proper table manners.
- Children who eat regularly scheduled meals and snacks are more prepared to learn and less likely to overeat at meals.
- Allow mealtime to end when your baby does not want to eat anymore. You may notice that your baby turns away from the food, or cries to tell you he/she is full. This teaches her to listen to her body and know when she is full; a skill that will help her maintain a healthy weight later in life.

## What about Other Ages of Infants?

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- Use this flip chart page as a benchmark for parents to understand average portion sizes for solid foods.
  - A 6-month-old baby will eat less than this. Parents should offer even softer foods, with more liquid. This helps baby swallow more easily as he/she is just beginning to learn how to eat solids.
  - An 11/12-month-old baby will probably eat more than this. Parents should offer more solid "finger-foods" and less formula and/or breast milk.
- As your baby becomes a toddler, he or she will eat more solids and less formula and/or breast milk.