Help Me Be Healthy

6 to 12 months

Date: ____________________________

My name is ________________________________.

I weigh ___________ pounds. I am ___________ inches long.

A special note for me: ____________________________

______________________________________________
I am your baby.  I grow best

I need breast milk or formula.

Feed me breast milk or baby formula with iron until I turn one. You can still breastfeed me after one year if we want.

I know when I get hungry or full. I let you know by the way I act. Please feed me when I act hungry. Let me eat until I act full.

I might drink breast milk or formula 4 or more times a day. My tummy can hold about 6 to 8 ounces at a time.

Hold me when you feed me. I feel safe in your arms.

Sometimes I stop eating to talk with you or look around. I am not full yet. Please talk to me. I love our time together.

After 6 months, I can start to eat other foods. Please go slowly. If our family has allergies or I was born early, talk to the doctor and WIC Nutritionist before you start other foods.

Be sure that I am ready. To eat other foods, I must be able to:

- Sit and hold my head steady.
- Show I want food by opening my mouth.
- Show I don’t want food by closing my mouth or turning my head.

I grow best with love and the right food!
Choose healthy foods. I need them to grow. Let me learn to eat foods like:

- Baby cereal - rice, oatmeal, barley
- Vegetables - squash, peas, carrots, green beans
- Fruit - applesauce, peaches, bananas, pears
- Meats - beef, chicken, turkey

Start me off with cereal and progress slowly to meats. Keep my foods plain. Do not add sugar, salt, spices, butter, fat, or gravy. If you buy baby food in a jar, choose plain vegetables, fruit, and meats. Do not buy dinners or desserts.

Give me only one new food at a time. My body must get used to it. Let me eat the food once a day. Wait one week to try another new food.

If I vomit, wheeze, get a rash or diarrhea, **stop** feeding me the food. Tell the doctor. These are signs I might not be ready or that I might have an allergy to a food.

I must move through four stages of food textures:

1. Smooth (strained or pureed)
2. Mashed (smooth with a few tiny lumps)
3. Mashed (more lumps)
4. Tiny pieces of food

Each stage gets a little harder for me to eat. Be sure I can chew and swallow foods from one stage before you move me to the next one.

I don’t need teeth to chew soft foods. I use my gums to mash food and my tongue and fingers to move it in my mouth.
**I must learn to eat my own way.** When I eat a new food, I might spit it out or make a face. All babies do. I will open my mouth if I want more. If I keep my mouth closed or turn my head, don’t force me to eat. But, try the food again at another meal.

I will like most foods. But, I might need to taste them 10 times before I know for sure. Please let me try many foods, even those you don’t like!

Be patient. I will get food on the floor and on my hands, face, and hair. Do not fuss or laugh. Be proud of me as I learn to eat.

**Keep me safe.** Wash your hands and mine before you fix my food or feed me. If you heat my food in a microwave oven, please follow all package directions. It could burn my mouth.

Put my food in a dish and feed it to me with a baby spoon. Throw out food left in a dish after I finish eating.

**Do not** give me foods I can choke on or get sick from, like:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hot dogs or meat sticks</th>
<th>Peanut butter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raw vegetables (except ripe avocado)</td>
<td>Bacon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole grapes</td>
<td>Fish with bones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato or corn chips</td>
<td>Bologna or deli meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popcorn</td>
<td>Whole eggs or egg whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard candy</td>
<td>Unpasteurized fruit juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raisins</td>
<td>Rare or raw meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts</td>
<td>Honey or food made with it</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Teach me to drink from a cup.

Use a small cup that does not break. Pour a little water into it. Lift the cup so it touches my lips and I get a taste.

I need practice! Let me drink from a cup at meals. Hold the cup and let me take sips. I can drink breast milk, formula, and WIC juice in a cup, too.

As I learn to drink more formula from a cup, I drink less from a bottle. By one year, I should be “off” the bottle.

Do not give me punch, tea, or soda. The sugar hurts my teeth and does not help me grow strong.

Let me eat food with my fingers.

When I am 8 or 9 months, I might want to eat food with my fingers. You still need to use a spoon to feed me. But, let me try to feed myself, too.

Prepare foods so I can’t choke on them. Safe “finger” foods are:

- Tiny pieces of cooked vegetables or soft fruit
- Tiny pieces of cooked meat, chicken, or turkey
- Mashed cooked beans, egg yolk, or tofu
- Chopped noodles or rice
- Bite-size pieces of toast, plain crackers, or soft tortilla

Make pieces of food no bigger than this or the size of a green pea:
How much should I eat?

As I get better at eating, I will need to eat about 5 or 6 times a day. One meal might be breast milk or formula. Another meal might be breast milk or formula plus cereal. As I start eating more foods, you can give me 2 or 3 at a meal. Here are some ideas:

- Breast milk or formula + baby oatmeal cereal + peaches
- Fork-mashed peas + rice + chopped chicken
- Breast milk or formula in a cup + tiny pieces of banana + chopped noodles

Start with one or 2 tablespoons of each food. Give me more if I want it.

Let me eat until I act full. I might close my lips, turn or shake my head, or raise my arm. Ask me if I am full. Then, let me stop eating if I want to.

Eat with me at our family meals. I eat better when you are with me. Let’s turn the TV off so we can talk.

How do you know I eat enough?

The doctor says I am gaining weight and growing well.

Please talk to the WIC Nutritionist if you have any questions about feeding me.
Play with me!

Put me on a blanket on the floor and sit down with me. Put a toy just out of my reach so I can move to get it. Roll a ball to me. Hold both my hands and let me walk with you.

I love to learn from you. Read to me. Sing a song. Let’s play games like peek-a-boo and so-big. Take me for a walk and show me new things. I’m active—keep an eye on me!

Look what I can do!

6 to 9 Months-

I can sit up and roll over. I will start to creep and crawl. I like to shake things and drop them to see what happens.

9 to 12 Months-

I like to use my hands. I can hold my cup. I like to point and wave bye-bye. I say da-da and ma-ma. I can pull myself up to stand.
Health and Safety Tips

♥ I need check ups and shots to stay healthy. I should visit the doctor at 6 months, 9 months, and one year of age.

♥ I must sit when I eat. Never leave me alone when I eat or when changing or bathing me.

♥ Clean my gums and teeth with a clean, wet, soft cloth after I eat. Ask the doctor if I need fluoride.

♥ Never put me to bed with a bottle. I could choke, get an earache, or ruin my teeth.

♥ If other people feed me, be sure to ask what food and how much food I had to eat.

♥ Let me explore and learn. See each room like I will from the floor, and make it safe for me.

♥ It’s the law! Buckle me into an infant car seat before we ride in a car. Install my seat in the car’s back seat, facing backwards.

♥ Keep me away from cigarette smoke, drugs and alcohol. Those habits are not healthy for you or me.

Ask the WIC Nutritionist if you need help with any of these tips.