

Consumer and Family Sciences

Department of Foods and Nutrition



Nutrition Fact Sheet

Feeding Smart from the Start

This publication was written by a student in Purdue's Foods and Nutrition 530 course, Public Health Nutrition. The content was reviewed by experts at Purdue and other institutions.

*The author of this publication is **Katy Connolly**.*

Reviewers were:

Barbara Mayfield,
MS, RD, Purdue
continuing lecturer in
foods and nutrition

Amy Mobley, PhD,
RD, Purdue clinical
assistant professor in
foods and nutrition

Laura Palmer, MS,
RD, Purdue Extension
specialist in foods and
nutrition

Georgia Wagner,
MA, RD, CD, Purdue
Extension educator in
Wayne County

**Madeleine
Sigman-Grant, PhD,**
RD, University of
Nevada professor and
Extension specialist

It's important to give your child the best start in life. One way you can do that is by feeding your child smart, from the start. Feeding your child nutritious foods and teaching him or her about good nutrition can help your child grow up healthy and establish healthy food choices for life.



Breast milk is the smart first food

Compare breast milk to commercial feeding.

<u>Breast milk</u>	<u>Formula</u>
Fights infections; promotes growth	Lacks antibodies and growth factors
Offers the best nutrition	Manufactured combination of nutrients
Easily digested	Intestinal allergens to some babies
Increased bonding time	Flexibility of feeding
Always available	Preparation time and bottle cleaning
Free	Costly

Smart tips for starting solid foods

Most babies are ready to try solid foods when they are 4 to 6 months old.

Look for cues that your baby is ready:

- Can sit up without support.
- Has good head control.
- Shows an interest in foods that you are eating.

When your baby is ready to start solids:

- Start with rice cereal — 1 tablespoon is a serving.
- Next try pureed vegetables — 1 or 2 tablespoons at a time.

- Always feed with a spoon.

Remember:

- Babies will turn their heads away, indicating they are full.
- Never put solid foods in a bottle — this can cause overfeeding or choking.
- Do not give your child cow's milk until he or she is 1 year old; this will decrease the risk of allergy complications.
- Provide whole milk from 1 year until age 2 for normal growth and brain development. At age 2, switch to 1 percent milk.
- Once a baby is ready for solids, add one new food at a time and try it for 2 or 3 days. Watch for negative reactions. If reactions occur, stop feeding that food and talk with your baby's doctor about possible food allergies.

Smart tips for starting finger foods

Start when your baby is about 9 months old. Again, look for cues from your baby:

- Has your baby started picking things up?
- Does your baby pick food off your plate at mealtimes?
- Only offer soft, easy-to-chew foods.
- Cut food into small pieces.

Allowed

Bananas
Softened crackers
Cheerios
Cooked vegetables
Cooked or soft
raw fruits

Avoid

(Choking hazards)
Pretzels
Peanut butter (alone)
Hot dogs
Raisins
Grapes
Nuts



Smart snack ideas for young children

Snacks are an important source of your child's nutrition. Make them tasty, fun, and nutritious. Here are some ideas:

Yogurt	Fruit muffins
Tuna salad	Smoothies
Crackers	Cottage cheese
Slices of cheese with fruit	
Peanut butter on apple slices	

Have a picky eater? Don't worry ... it's normal

Children will learn to eat a new food by looking at it, watching you eat it, and tasting, but not swallowing, it. Children will do more if they feel they have more control over the situation.

Feeding tips:

- Offer a food 10-15 times — it may take that long for your child to accept it.
- Offer a variety of healthy foods and let your child choose.
- Offer less milk and juice between meals to prevent fullness.
- Remember, children need fewer calories than adults, so they might not be hungry.

References and resources

Ellyn Satter. www.ellynsatter.com

Colorado State University Extension:
www.ext.colostate.edu/PUBS/FOODNUT/09366.html

Nemours Foundation Division of Health and Prevention Services:
www.kidshealth.org/index.html

Smart tips for toddlers

Ways to encourage healthy eating:

- Be a good role model: Eat the way you want your child to eat.
- Consider Ellyn Satter's Division of Responsibility*: Be responsible for what, when, and where your child eats. Let your child be responsible for how much and whether or not to eat.
- Let your children help in the kitchen: This can get them excited about what they are eating, and they may be more willing to try new foods.

*Ellyn Satter: *If Your Child is Finicky*

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