

# Feeding Infants and Toddlers

Highlighting Hispanic  
Heritage Foods

Based on Dietary Guidelines for Americans

**NACCHO**  
National Association of County & City Health Officials

Let's Eat  
Healthy 

  
Dairy Council  
of California

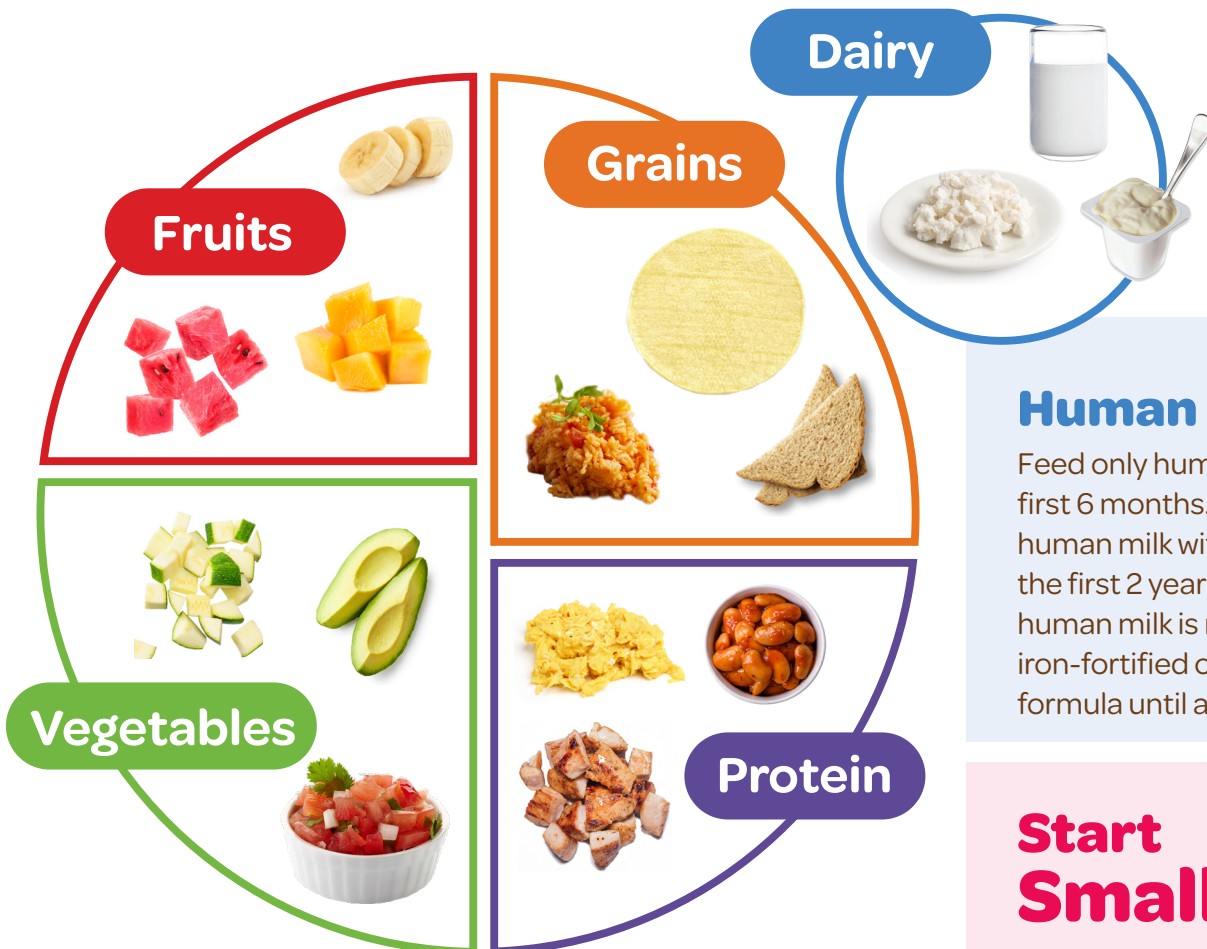
# Make Every Bite Count

A variety of foods from all the food groups work together to support your child's health, body and brain.



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## Human Milk

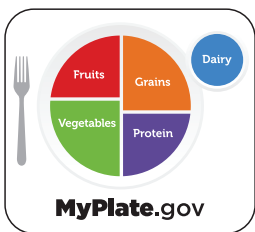
Feed only human milk for the first 6 months. Continue to feed human milk with food for at least the first 2 years of life. When human milk is not possible, feed iron-fortified commercial milk formula until age 1.

## Start Small

At about age 6 months, offer foods from all food groups when possible. Your baby may only eat one bite while learning to like foods.

## Nutrition

To grow, your child needs many nutrients, like iron, choline, zinc, calcium and vitamin D. Offer foods that are naturally full of nutrients as often as you can.



Keep the traditional taste of Hispanic foods and still help your child eat smart by using MyPlate as a guide.

### Begin including spices anytime after age 6 months:

- Onion
- Cilantro
- Basil
- Cinnamon
- Garlic
- Oregano
- Cumin

## YOUR TURN:

Which traditional foods do you serve from each of the food groups?

# Foods to Grow Baby's Body and Brain



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Your baby's body and brain are changing a lot in the first 2 years of life. Around age 6 months, your baby starts to need more nutrients in addition to human milk or iron-fortified commercial milk formula.

Grow the **brain**  
for learning.



Fuel growth and development of  
**muscles**.



Build strong **bones and  
teeth** for life.



Boost your baby's  
**immune  
system** by  
breastfeeding for  
at least 2 years  
along with food.



## TRY THESE:



Chicken



Beans



Eggs



Cheese



Yogurt



Oatmeal



Fish



Nopales



Cantaloupe

## YOUR TURN:

Which foods do you try to serve for your baby's body and brain?



# Starting with Solid Foods



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Your baby may be ready to start eating small bites of soft food around age 6 months. Introduce first foods when your baby is able to sit upright, shows interest in food, brings food to mouth, and can swallow without choking.

## Offer Foods from All the Food Groups

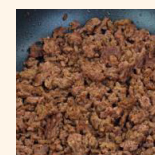
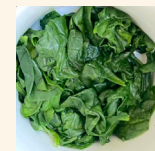
Foods from the **Dairy**, **Vegetables**, **Fruits**, **Grains** and **Protein** food groups work together to give your baby nutrition for learning and growing.



**TIP!**

## Include iron-rich foods for optimal development:

- Ground beef
- Seafood
- Eggs
- Mashed beans
- Cooked dark green vegetables
- Lentils that are soft or pureed until smooth



## How to Offer First Foods

- ✓ **Introduce one food at a time.** Then wait 3 to 5 days before adding a new food to see if your child has reactions like a rash.
- ✓ **Sit and talk with your baby at meals** to create a connection and positive experiences.
- ✓ **If your doctor says OK, give foods such as thinned peanut butter and eggs.** Giving these foods can make allergies less likely.

## Don't serve these foods before age 1:

- Honey, which can make your baby very sick
- Almond, oat or other plant-based nondairy beverages, which don't have nutrition babies need
- Sweetened or caffeinated drinks like coffee, tea or soda
- Fruit juices

Also feed iron-fortified grains like:

- Oats
- Barley
- Rice
- Multigrain cereals



## EXPLORE MORE:

Watch a video on infant and toddler feeding recommendations for solid food (video 0:08).



# Exploring Many Foods



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**When your baby is ready, offer many different foods, flavors and textures.**



## Pureed/Creamy:

- Vegetables
- Plain full-fat yogurt
- Meats
- Applesauce



## Soft Solids:

- Cooked vegetables
- Eggs
- Shredded cheese
- Ripe banana
- Oatmeal



## Soft Lumpy/Minced:

- Cottage cheese
- Beans
- Avocado
- Tomatoes
- Mango
- Shredded meat



## Chopped:

- Meat
- Cantaloupe
- Nopales
- Quartered grapes
- Bread

## GOOD TO KNOW

At 12+ months old, your baby can eat most foods in small pieces.

Introduce whole milk as a beverage along with food.



Your baby may be hungry one day and not want to eat the next day. This is normal.



You do not have to make your baby finish food on the plate at any age.

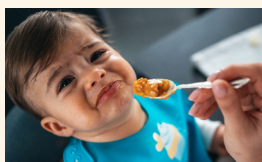
## Learn Hunger and Fullness Signs

Responding to your baby's hunger or fullness will help teach how much to eat.



### Signs of Hunger:

- Gets excited about food
- Reaches or points to food
- Opens mouth for food



### Signs of Fullness:

- Closes mouth
- Turns head away from the breast or bottle
- Relaxes hands

## How to Keep Baby Safe from Choking

**Stay with your baby during meals.**

**Don't serve foods that often cause choking:**

- Hot dogs
- Big chunks of meat
- Peanut butter
- Hard candies
- Whole nuts/seeds
- Whole grapes
- Raw vegetables
- Infant cereal in baby bottles



**EXPLORE  
MORE:**



**How to  
reduce  
choking**



**How to  
serve  
finger  
foods**

## FUN FACT

**Babies don't need  
teeth to chew.**

# Feeding Toddlers



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**Toddlers between 12 months and 2 years old are learning how to explore food, flavors and textures. Children can eat many of the same wholesome foods as the family if served in small bites and portions.**

## OFFER

**Whole foods from all the food groups provide nutrition for growing, learning and health.**



## Milk

Move to whole dairy milk in a cup at around 12 months of age to help meet calcium, vitamin D and protein needs.



### Why Whole Dairy Milk?

- Milk includes important fats that are needed for brain growth.
- Milk has a unique package of nutrients that can be difficult to replace.
- Plant-based nondairy drinks made with nuts, rice or coconut do not have the same nutrients found in dairy milk.

**If your child has trouble switching to dairy milk, you may want to try:**

- Warming the milk.
- Offering lactose-free milk if your child or family is concerned about lactose intolerance.



### Dairy

Whole milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, cheeses  
If your doctor recommends it for medical reasons:  
fortified plain soy beverage



### Vegetables

Zucchini, tomatoes, carrots, peas



### Fruits

Cantaloupe, pineapple, papaya, strawberries, guava



### Grains

Tortillas, masa, rice, bread, cereals



### Protein

Meats, eggs, nut butters, beans

## TRADE UP

**Limit extra sugar, salt and processed meats, which do not provide health benefits.**



Tortilla chips



Jicama slices

# Growing with the Food Groups



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Build healthy eating patterns as a family by mixing and matching foods that your family enjoys and that fit your cultural traditions and budget.

## Building Up to a Quesadilla



### 6+ months:

**Avocado** slices dipped in iron-fortified **cereal**, pureed **meat** or **beans**, and **yogurt** mixed with **fruit** to add more food groups.

### TIP!

- At around 6 months of age, your baby needs foods such as **lean meats, fortified infant cereals and beans** that are rich in iron and zinc.
- Offer cereal as a food**, not in a bottle, so baby can learn how to eat.



### 8 to 12 months:

Mashed **avocado**, shredded **cheese**, mashed **pinto beans**, **ground meat**, diced **tomatoes** and **rice**.

### TIP!

- Plain yogurt and cheese can be given as first foods** with vegetables, fruits, grains and proteins.
- Keep portions small** so your toddler is not overwhelmed.



### 1 to 2 years:

Soft **tortilla** with melted **cheese**, a thin layer of **beans** and shredded **meat**, cut into strips. **Avocado** mixed with **salsa** as a dip. Add a **fruit** or strips of **bell pepper** for more variety.

### TIP!

- You can serve whole dairy milk at 1 year old.**
- Serve most foods **without added salt or sugars**.



GOOD TO  
KNOW



### Keep offering foods.

It can take 10 times or more to accept new foods.

# Beverages for Babies and Toddlers



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**Make every sip count. Drinks matter for your child's health.**

	0 to 6 Months	6 to 12 Months	1 to 2 Years
Offer Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Human milk</li><li>● Iron-fortified infant formula (if human milk not available)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Human milk</li><li>● Iron-fortified infant formula (if human milk not available)</li><li>● Water with meals (½ to 1 cup per day)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Human milk</li><li>● Whole dairy milk or lactose-free whole milk (2 to 3 cups per day)</li><li>● Fortified plain soy beverage if a doctor says there’s an allergy to dairy milk</li><li>● Water (1 to 4 cups per day)</li></ul>
Drinks to Limit			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● No more than ½ cup of 100% fruit juice per day</li></ul>
Drinks to Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● No bottles with infant cereal added</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● No fruit drinks</li><li>● No plant-based nondairy beverages</li><li>● No flavored milk</li><li>● No toddler milks or toddler formulas</li><li>● No coffee</li><li>● No tea</li><li>● No soda</li></ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● No beverages with added sugars during the first 2 years of life</li></ul>		

## Healthy Teeth

Fruit juice and sweetened beverages can lead to cavities, or holes in the teeth.

### To help prevent cavities:

- Serve whole fruit instead of juice. If you serve fruit juice, add water to make it less sweet.
- Prepare traditional drinks like agua fresca without adding sugar.
- Eat crunchy vegetables and cheese to help keep teeth clean and healthy.



**TIP!**

**Choose water between meals.** Fluoride is important for teeth, and tap water usually has more fluoride than bottled water.



**EXPLORE  
MORE:**

Watch this video to learn more about the best drinks for young children.



# Recipes

## Plantain and Cheese Sopes

These sopes are crispy on the outside and soft on the inside, with a little sweetness.

### Ingredients:

½ cup corn flour or masa harina  
½ ripe plantain, mashed  
½ cup water  
½ cup panela or mozzarella cheese, cubed  
Unsalted butter or oil

Makes 7 to 8 sopes

Recipe source: @babychefmx on Instagram

### Preparation:

1. In a bowl mix the corn flour with the mashed plantain. Add the water a little at a time until dough is soft.
2. Make small balls with the dough and place a cube or 1 to 2 teaspoons of cheese in the center as the filling. Press to seal the dough around the cheese.
3. Place balls onto parchment paper and flatten to ½-inch thick circles.
4. In a pan or comal, add butter or oil and cook the mini sopes on medium-high heat until golden brown on both sides.
5. Add a favorite protein and fruit to make this a meal with all 5 food groups.



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## Sopa de Pollo

This classic, comforting soup is perfect for little ones and families.

### Ingredients:

8 oz chicken with bones  
¼ cup carrot, peeled and chopped  
¼ cup leek, chopped  
⅓ cup celery, chopped  
1 clove garlic, chopped  
2 cups unsalted vegetable broth or water from cooking chicken  
½ cup cooked rice or chopped tortilla  
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

Makes 4 cups of soup

### Preparation:

1. Cook chicken by boiling. Save the water to use in the soup.
2. Remove bones and any larger pieces of fat and skin, then cut chicken into small pieces.
3. Chop carrot, leek, celery and garlic all very finely.
4. Add olive oil in a saucepan on medium heat. Add the vegetables. Sauté for about 5 minutes until golden brown.
5. Add the broth or water and rice. Let it cook for another 5 minutes over high heat.
6. Add chicken to the broth and vegetables and cook together on medium heat for 10 minutes.
7. Scoop into shallow bowls. Let cool. When serving to babies, strain away some liquid to make eating easier.
8. Sprinkle with your favorite toppings like queso fresco, lime or cilantro.



# Additional Resources



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## **MyPlate Nutrition by Ages** (Myplate.gov)

► <https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages>

## **Simple Food Pairings for Infants and Toddlers** (West Virginia WIC Program)

► <https://www.drink-milk.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/WIC-Perfect-Pairings-Brochure.pdf>

## **Airplane Choo Choo - A Guide to Feeding Your Baby for the First Two Years** (National Dairy Council)

► <https://www.dairymax.org/sites/default/files/Airplane%20Choo%20Choo%202020.pdf>

## **Meal Planning, Shopping and Budgeting for Your Family** (SNAP-Ed)

► <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/resources/nutrition-education-materials/meal-planning-shopping-and-budgeting>

## **I'm One: Let's Have Fun!** (California WIC)

► <https://myfamily.wic.ca.gov/Content/Documents/NutritionHealth/Toddler/Im-One.pdf>

## **I'm Two: Look What I Can Do!** (California WIC)

► <https://myfamily.wic.ca.gov/Content/Documents/NutritionHealth/Toddler/Im-Two.pdf>

## **Flavors of My Kitchen** (Champions for Change)

► <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/library/materials/flavors-my-kitchen>

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This document was built to conform to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, so individuals with disabilities have access to, and use of, information and data comparable to that provided to individuals without disabilities.