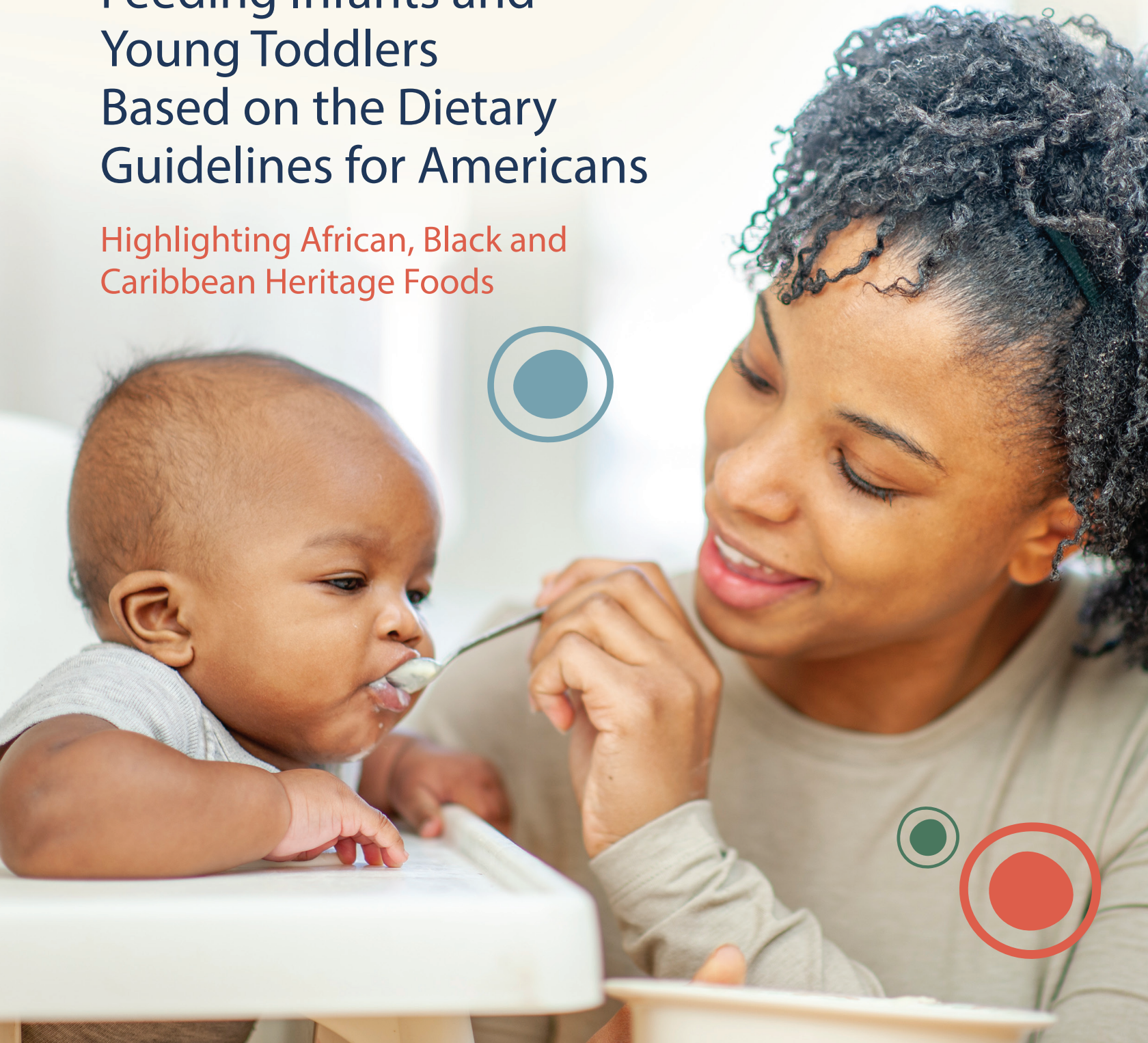


# Feeding Infants and Young Toddlers Based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Highlighting African, Black and  
Caribbean Heritage Foods





## What Can Baby Drink?

Breast milk is all the hydration and nutrition that babies need in the first 6 months. If human milk is not an option, or baby needs more than is available, feed an iron-fortified commercial milk formula.

- The nutrients in breast milk provide the right balance of nutrition and protection for the first 2 years.
- Breastfeeding supports bonding and promotes health benefits for both mom and baby.



Beverage	0 to 6 Months	6 to 12 Months	1 to 2 Years
Breast Milk	✓	✓	✓
Formula	✓	✓	Transition to whole milk in a cup
Water	✗	Water with meals (½ to 1 cup a day)	✓
Whole Dairy Milk (not flavored)	✗	✗	✓
Plant-Based Beverage	✗	✗	Fortified soy beverage if allergic to whole dairy milk. Oat, almond and other plant beverages don't meet recommendations.
100% Fruit Juice	✗	✗	No more than ½ cup a day! (whole fruit is best)
Sugary Drinks	✗	✗	✗

Some 1-year-olds do best with a slow change to milk. Warmed dairy milk may be better accepted.



Recommend



Limit



DO NOT serve



## Drinks for Healthy Bodies and Teeth

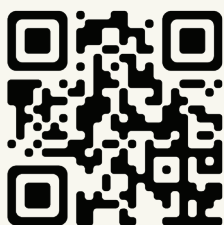
Most tap water contains fluoride, which can help protect teeth against cavities. Choose tap water when safe and available or filtered water.



All sweetened beverages can lead to cavities. Limit access to sugary drinks, including 100% fruit juice. Serve fresh or frozen fruit instead.



Build healthy teeth and bones with milk, yogurt and cheese. Whole dairy milk has healthy fats, protein and nutrients for growing bodies and brains. Plant-based milks don't offer the same nutrition. Do not offer chocolate mixes. Choose lactose-free milk, if preferred.



# Starting with Solid Foods



## When is Baby Ready for Solid Foods?

Around 6 months old when your baby can:

- Sit up alone or with support
- Bring fingers or objects to mouth
- Swallow food without pushing it out

## Why You Can Serve Top Food Allergens

Giving your child foods such as eggs, dairy, soy, peanut products or fish may help your child not get allergies. Introduce one food at a time and wait 4 days before increasing the amount or offering more.



## Start with Iron and Zinc-Rich Foods

Begin with a very small amount of a single-ingredient food, about 1 to 2 teaspoons to make every bite count.

- Semi-liquid, iron-fortified cereal
- Pureed or moist shredded chicken, pork, beef, beans and seafood
- Soft and safe finger foods like ripe banana, avocado and pears coated with infant cereal to add iron or yogurt to add zinc

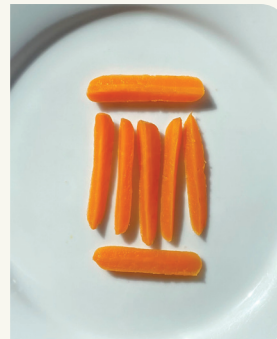
## How to Keep Baby Safe from Choking



Cook hard foods like carrots until soft and easy to chew.

Cut foods such as grapes vertically into strips.

Thin peanut butter with water or milk.



Avoid small (marble-sized), sticky or hard foods.

Hot dogs, nuts, seeds, popcorn, whole grapes, dried fruit, raw hard veggies, peanut butter and candy are common choking hazards.

No cereal added in bottles. It can lead to choking and will not make the infant sleep longer.

### What Not to Feed Under 12 Months:

- No honey
- No fruit juices or sugary drinks



## Learn Hunger and Fullness Signs

The way you respond to natural signs of hunger or fullness is called responsive feeding. The idea is to let your baby take the lead by actions or words.



### Signs of Hunger

- Excited to see food
- Reaches out to grab food
- Eats at a consistent pace



### Signs of Fullness

- Easily distracted
- Tries to get out of high chair
- Eating slows down

If the doctor says your baby or toddler is growing well, use responsive feeding. You do not have to make your child clear the plate at any age.

## Picky Eating

Children may not eat the fresh flavorful foods you serve every time. Be patient while they are learning to eat at their own pace. Ask family and friends for help to provide a wide variety of foods from the food groups.



Use familiar foods: Serve a new food with bread or milk.

Offer choices: As the parent, you get to choose what foods are available to eat. Your toddler can select from choices you provide.

Involve toddlers: Invite your toddler to help prepare meals and make mealtime fun!

Eat as a family: Let your toddler see others eating the same foods.

Serve foods from the food groups: Try to offer 3 or more food groups at meals and snacks. Limit salt and sugar in foods that are served.

Keep offering foods: It can take 10 times before your toddler tries a food again.



### Food Groups



Fruits



Grains



Dairy



Vegetables

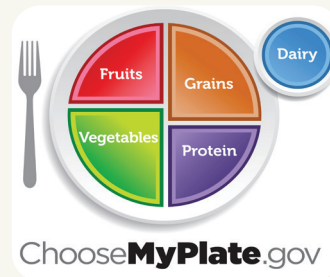


Protein



# Make Every Bite Count: Serve Nutritious Soul Foods

Lay the foundation for healthy, diverse and flavorful choices from age 6 months to 2 years.



## Cultural Food Ideas by Food Groups

## Tips

### Protein

- Catfish
- Cod
- Salmon
- Beef
- Chicken
- Black-Eyed Peas
- Chickpeas
- Lentils

Use spices and herbs to flavor foods rather than salt or added fats.

To reduce the choking risk, cook beans until soft, mash or blend, or flatten each one between your fingers.

### Dairy

- Yogurt, Plain
- Cheese
- Kefir
- Cottage Cheese
- Whole Milk
- Soy Beverage\*
- Buttermilk

Feed human milk through age 2 and beyond when possible. After age 12 months, stop commercial formula and introduce whole milk.

\*If allergic to dairy milk, use unsweetened fortified soy beverage.

### Grains

- Grits
- Pasta
- Rice
- Couscous
- Oatmeal
- Teff

Include whole grains like oatmeal and millet.

Limit salty snacks and cereals with added sugars.

### Vegetables

- Yams
- Zucchini
- Squash
- Okra
- Green Beans
- Mustard Greens
- Collards
- Plantains

Organic foods are a personal choice but not needed. Fresh, frozen and canned are good options.

- Choose canned vegetables with low or no sodium.
- Choose canned fruits in natural juices rather than heavy syrup.

### Fruits

- Banana
- Berries
- Peaches
- Passion Fruit
- Melon
- Papaya

### Herbs and Spices

- Allspice
- Cinnamon
- Cloves
- Curry
- Ginger
- Nutmeg
- Paprika
- Berbere

Mix Haitian pikliz with plain yogurt to reduce the spiciness.

Use low-sodium options or homemade rather than regular store bought.

Feed small servings of what the rest of the family is eating. Serve cinnamon in plain yogurt, nutmeg with baked sweet potato, paprika on chicken, or cumin with beans.

# What's on MyPlate?

Include many different foods from all the food groups to support your child's health, body and brain.

Raspberries keep the immune system healthy. Plain, whole-fat yogurt helps build strong bones, teeth and build muscle.



Barley has fiber for healthy digestion and helps with brain growth.



Whole dairy milk provides vitamin D, calcium and protein for healthy growth.



Green beans help keep skin and eyes healthy.



Cod helps build and repair tissue. Fish supports cognitive function and early brain development.



## Tips:

Use the oven or air-fryer to cook breaded chicken or fish as a healthier alternative to frying in oil.

Lactose intolerant? Use lactose-free milk or low-lactose cheeses like cheddar and Parmesan.

To get the most nutrients, pick fruits and vegetables in season or choose frozen produce, which is harvested at peak ripeness. Fun fact: Plantains are in season all year.

Baby gassy or fussy? It's not always what's eaten that causes the problem. Consult your health care provider before restricting intake or removing a food.

# Recipes

## Sweet Potato Hash

This savory and sweet dish is sure to be a favorite at any meal.

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
- 1 cup frozen or fresh chopped bell peppers and onions
- 1 medium sweet potato, peeled and cut into small cubes less than ½ inch (2 cups total)
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

### Preparation

1. Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat.
2. Sauté bell peppers and onions until tender, about 5 minutes.
3. Add remaining ingredients and reduce heat to medium.
4. Cook for 20 to 25 minutes, stirring every 2 to 3 minutes. Sweet potato may begin to stick to skillet but continue stirring gently until cooked through to desired tenderness.
5. Turn off heat and cover with lid for softer texture.



## Colorful Cheesy Grits

Kids have small appetites so make every bite count. Boost nutrition by adding your favorite protein like salmon and your favorite leafy greens like spinach or collards.

### Ingredients

- 2 cups water
- 1/2 cup quick cooking grits, not instant
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup lactose-free dairy milk, room temperature
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika

Optional: cooked salmon and leafy greens

### Preparation

1. Heat water in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat to boiling. Slowly whisk grits, butter and garlic into the boiling water. Reduce heat to medium-low. Gradually whisk to prevent lumpy grits. Cover the pan and cook, stirring occasionally, until grits have thickened, about 5 minutes.
2. Add cheese, milk and paprika. Cook and stir until the cheese is melted.
3. Add salmon and leafy greens like spinach, collards or mustard greens to boost the nutrition and flavor in every bite.







## Additional Resources

Breastfeeding myths in the African-American community

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/its-only-natural/addressing-breastfeeding-myths/breastfeeding-myths-african-american-community>

MyPlate Nutrition by Ages

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

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>

Soulful Recipes

<https://www.naccho.org/uploads/body-images/BONDS-cookbook.pdf>



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