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## “Feeding Your 1- to 3-Month-Old”

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

During your baby's first 3 months, breast milk or formula will continue to provide all the nutrition needed.

But as your infant develops physically and mentally, the feeding process will evolve. In general, your child will move toward consuming more milk during each feeding, so won't need to feed as often and will sleep longer at night. But there will be times during the next year — and, especially, in the first 3 months of life — when a growth spurt increases your baby's appetite. Continue to feed on demand and increase the number of feedings as needed.

Your infant also will become more alert as the weeks progress, starting to coo and developing a social smile. So there will probably be more interaction between you and your baby during the feeding process.

### **Breastfeeding: How Much and How Often?**

During these months, breastfed infants start to feed less frequently and sleep for longer periods at night. You can be reassured that your breastfed infant probably is eating enough if he or she:

- seems alert, content, and active
- is steadily gaining weight, growing, and developing
- feeds six to eight times per day
- is wetting and soiling diapers on a regular basis

Your baby might not be eating enough if he or she doesn't appear satisfied, even after feeding, and cries constantly or is irritable. Call your baby's doctor if notice any of these signs.

Remember that after about a month, breastfed babies tend to have fewer bowel movements than they did before. When your child is around 2 months old, he or she may not have a bowel movement after each feeding, or even every day. If your infant still hasn't had a bowel movement after 3 days, call your child's doctor.

During periods of rapid growth, you may notice that your infant wants to feed more frequently. This frequent nursing prompts the mother's body to increase the milk supply, and in a couple of days, supply and demand will get into balance.

Exclusively breastfed infants should get vitamin D supplements by 2 months of age, but additional supplements, water, juice, and solid foods aren't usually necessary.

## **Formula Feeding: How Much and How Often?**

Babies digest formula more slowly, so if you're bottle-feeding your baby, you may have feedings less frequently than someone who is breastfeeding.

As your baby grows, he or she will be able to eat more and may allow increasingly more time between feeding. You will also notice that your baby is starting to sleep longer at night.

During the second month of life, infants may take about 4 or 5 ounces at each feeding. By the end of 3 months, your baby will probably need an additional ounce at each feeding.

These are general guidelines, and your baby may be hungrier more or less often than this. That's why it's important to pay attention to your infant's signals of being hungry or full. A baby who is getting enough might slow down, stop, or turn away from the breast or bottle.

One note about formula feeding: It's easier to overfeed when you're using formula because it takes less effort to drink from a bottle than from a breast. You can help avoid overfeeding by making sure that the hole on the bottle's nipple is the right size. The liquid should drip slowly from the hole and not pour out. Also, resist the urge to finish feeding the bottle when your baby shows those signs of being full.

Never use a bottle prop — it's a choking hazard. It also can encourage your child to sleep with a bottle in the mouth, which can lead to tooth decay.

## **A Word about Spitting Up**

Many infants "spit up" small amounts after eating or during burping. This gradually gets less frequent by the time a baby is 6 months old, and is nearly gone by the time the baby is about 10 months old. Spitting up a small amount — less than 1 ounce (30 ml) — shouldn't be a concern as long as it happens within an hour of feeding and doesn't bother the baby.

You can reduce spitting up in these early months by:

- feeding before the baby gets very hungry
- keeping the baby in a semi-upright position during the feeding and for an hour afterwards
- burping the baby regularly
- avoiding overfeeding
- not jostling or playing vigorously with the baby right after a feeding

If your baby seems to be spitting up large amounts, spitting up forcefully, is irritable during or after feedings, or seems to be losing weight or not gaining weight as expected, call your child's doctor. And if your child has a fever, or shows any signs of dehydration (such as not wetting diapers), call the doctor right away.