

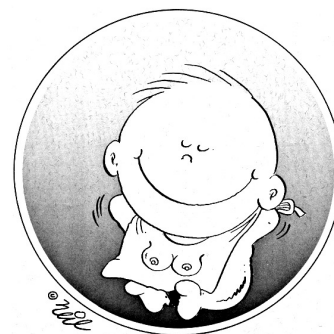
Exclusive Breastfeeding provides all your baby needs for the first six months.

Babies can grow and thrive on breast milk alone. They do not need water, formula, juice, tea or any foods until six months old.* Some parents start to introduce small quantities of food from 4 months, but this is not essential. Foods given in addition to breastfeeding are called *complementary foods*. This means they complement breastfeeding rather than replace it.

How do I know when my baby is ready for more than breast milk?

You might notice some of these developmental signs:

- ◇ Baby can stay sitting upright without falling over,
- ◇ Baby can control her/his jaw and tongue to move up and down and side to side,
- ◇ Baby can pick up small objects and get them to his/her mouth,
- ◇ Baby seeks to nurse more that is unrelated to illness, teething or a change in routine.



What about learning to chew?

Babies who are introduced to complementary foods from 6 months, quickly learn to take lumpy foods. They just spend less time at the thin, runny foods stage. Have you ever heard of anyone who didn't learn to chew?

Will giving my baby early solids make him/her sleep better?

Some babies are good sleepers and some are not, no matter how they are fed. Giving early solids may just replace the goodness of milk with hard to digest foods. Adding other foods and drinks too early may cause a baby health problems such as overweight, tummy problems, chest problems, and increased risk of allergies.



How long can we keep on breastfeeding?

Breastfeeding continues to be good for mother and baby for as long as it continues. Baby gets cuddles, good food and protection from illness. Mother has an easy way of settling the baby, uses up weight put on during pregnancy and has a reduced risk of breast cancer. Many mothers and babies continue for 12 months, some for much longer.

What if I want to stop breastfeeding earlier?

Breastfeeding should reduce gradually so you, your breasts and your baby get used to the changes. Remember to find other ways of keeping in contact with your baby when not breastfeeding. If you are thinking of stopping because of a problem with breastfeeding, talk to a breastfeeding counsellor or other health worker who knows about breastfeeding. Often the problem can be solved without stopping breastfeeding.

*Sometimes a baby may have a special health need that may require early or extra food in addition to breastfeeding. Your dietitian and doctor will discuss this with you if needed.