

---

## Module – Infant: Feeding Solid Foods

### Time:

15 - 30 minutes

### WIC Status:

Any Infant Status

Any Breastfeeding Status

Postpartum Woman



### Learning Objectives:

Participants will:

1. Be able to identify signs that an infant is ready for solid food.
2. Understand how to introduce solid foods to infants.

### Handouts and Materials:

- Handouts:
  - Kentucky Infant Feeding Guide Birth to Four Months
  - Kentucky Infant Feeding Guide Four to Eight Months
  - Kentucky Infant Feeding Guide Eight to Twelve Months
  - I Eat Homemade Baby Food Because...

### Facilitating WIC Discussion Group Concepts:

- Providing participants with a more meaningful nutrition education experience that involves interactive learning.
- As the certifying health professional, you will be the facilitator and moderate a group conversation-style discussion.
- Encourage all participants to participate but recognize that some participants may prefer not to speak in a group setting. If the participant cannot answer, chooses not to answer, or has a negative response, you may respond with a statement such as “Trying something new is not always easy.”
- It is important to establish “ground rules” for the group. For example:
  - Set the time, agenda, and the length of session
  - Establish rules on confidentiality and sharing of group responsibilities.
  - Clarify procedural issues, especially listening to, respecting ideas or comments and allowing time and opportunity for others in the group to share.

---

## Outline – Infant: Feeding Solid Foods

### Icebreaker:

Have each participant introduce themselves and state the name and age of their infant/children. (Optional)

### Facilitated Discussion Topic Opening Questions:

Ask one of the following questions to facilitate discussion:

- *What have you heard about beginning solids?*
- *Why is it important to offer your infant solid foods?*

### Discussion Topics:

It is recommended to introduce solid food to an infant around 6 months of age. It is important to continue to provide breast milk at least 4-6 times per day or baby formula with iron (24-32 ounces each day) until your infant is 1 year old.

Remember, even if your baby is able to hold their bottle, not to prop the bottle or put them in the bed with the bottle which could lead to choking or tooth decay.

NOTE: If your family has food allergies or your infant was born early, talk to the doctor before you try to feed anything other than breast milk or iron fortified formula.

### Hunger and Fullness Cues

It's natural to be concerned about the amount of milk and foods your baby needs to grow. When feeding your baby, remember to watch for hunger and fullness cues.

#### **Signs of Hunger**

When baby is hungry he may:

- Keep his hands near his mouth
- Bend his arms and legs
- Make sucking noises
- Pucker his lips
- Search for nipple (root)

#### **Signs of Fullness**

When baby is full he may:

- Suck slower or stop sucking
- Relax his hands and arms
- Turn away from the nipple
- Push away
- Fall asleep

### Signs of Readiness for Solid Foods:

- Baby has good head control and can hold his head steady.
- Baby can sit up with little or no help.
- Baby follows spoon with eyes and opens mouth to eat food.
- Baby can close mouth over the spoon and eat the food without spitting it back out on the chin.

---

## Starting Solids:

- Solids should always be fed with a spoon.
- Show your baby the food in the spoon and as you bring it toward him; the baby will open the mouth.
- Offer one new food item at a time and wait 3 to 5 days before introducing a new food.
- When feeding store bought baby food, take out a small amount of food from the baby food jar and place in a bowl for feeding. Store remaining jarred food in the refrigerator. This will allow you to use the baby food from this jar for up to 2 days. Throw away opened baby food after 2 days. (Tip: Write the date on the jar the day it is opened so you or anyone else who feeds the baby will know when it should be thrown away.)  
NOTE: If you feed directly from the jar, throw the remaining food away after the meal.
- Your baby does not need any salt, sugar, or butter added to their food.
- You will know when your baby is finished eating when they:
  - Turn their head away
  - Close their mouth
  - Lose interest in eating
- Keep your baby's gums and teeth healthy by wiping them with a soft washcloth or gauze pad after feeding.

## Offering Solid Foods:

### Cereal

- When your baby shows signs that they are ready for solids, start with one teaspoon of rice cereal mixed with breast milk or formula.
- Slowly increase the amount of cereal to one to two tablespoons per day.
- Use single grain cereals such as rice, barley, or oat. Wait to introduce wheat until your baby is 8 months, due to risk of food allergies.
- At 9-12 months, your infant may be eating 4-6 tablespoons of cereal.

### Meats

- After your baby has been on cereal for 1 to 2 weeks, try 1-2 teaspoons of plain baby food meats or pureed meats. (Avoid dinners because they are low in protein and iron.)
  - Bacon, lunchmeats and hot dogs are not healthy choices for your baby and can cause choking.
  - As your baby gets older, try 1-2 tablespoons of mashed dried beans as a good protein source.
  - Eggs are not recommended until after 1 year of age.

---

## Vegetables

- Once your baby accepts cereal and meats, vegetables can be offered.
  - Begin with 1-2 teaspoons of plain baby food vegetables or pureed cooked vegetables and slowly increase the amount to 2-4 tablespoons a day.

## Fruit

- Begin with 1-2 teaspoons of plain baby food fruit or plain pureed fruit and slowly increase to 2-4 tablespoons per day.
- Use plain baby food fruits or pureed fruit instead of desserts.
- Juice:
  - Your baby does not need juice.
  - If you decide to give juice, wait until 8 months of age or older and offer it only in a cup. Limit juice to 4 ounces per day.
- Your baby does not need sweetened drinks such as tea, soda, sports drinks, flavored waters, Kool-Aid or Hi-C.

## Milk and Dairy

- It is important to continue to provide breast milk at least 4-6 times per day or 24-32 ounces of iron fortified infant formula until your infant is 1 year old.
- Plain yogurt or cottage cheese may be started at 6-8 months.
- Wait to offer whole milk until your baby is 12 months old. You may continue to offer breast milk beyond baby's first birthday.

## Feeding Older Babies

- Baby can tell you they are hungry with grunts or sounds and even pointing or reaching for the food.
- Your baby will learn to chew better and will be ready to try more chunky texture foods as the baby develops.
- Begin offering a sippy cup with water, breast milk, or formula around 8 months of age.
- Your baby may demand to feed themselves and may grab the spoon. It is ok to let your baby try to feed himself with the spoon.
- By 9-12 months, your baby can pick up food with their fingers. Encourage your baby to use their fingers and eat on their own. Place your child in a high chair and put small pieces of food on the tray. Your baby may make a mess, but this is okay!
  - Offer crackers, toasted bread or dry cereal if baby is ready for finger foods.
  - Try pasta noodles such as macaroni or spaghetti. Cut up the noodles into bite size pieces to avoid choking.
  - Offer mashed or finely chopped vegetables and fruits.
    - Fruits such as grapes and cherries that are round and slippery are high risk choking foods.

- 
- Foods that are firm, smooth, slippery or round can cause choking.
    - Always watch your infant and toddler when eating.
    - Encourage your infant and toddler to sit while eating.
    - Cut foods into small pieces.

### **Discuss Allergies**

- Signs of an allergy:
  - Skin rash, gas, diarrhea, difficulty breathing.
- Foods that are more likely to cause an allergic reaction are:
  - Cow's milk, egg whites, wheat, corn, soy milk or tofu, fish or other seafood, nuts.

### **Summary:**

Although you start solid foods around 6 months of age, it is important to continue to provide breast milk at least 4-6 times per day or baby formula with iron (24-32 ounces each day) until your infant is 1 year old. As your baby grows, you will introduce a variety of foods and textures. Feeding your infant is one way to nurture and bond with your baby as they grow and develop.

### **Closing Activity/Questions:**

Ask one of the following questions to conclude today's discussion.

- *What did you find most interesting about today's topic?*
- *Was there something you heard today that you haven't heard before?*

### **References:**

- California Baby Behavior Campaign -  
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WICCaliforniaBabyBehaviorCampaign.aspx>
- California WIC - Understanding Your Baby Infant Behavior  
[http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Sharing\\_Center/CA/SelfLearningModules/UnderstandingBabyEng.pdf](http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Sharing_Center/CA/SelfLearningModules/UnderstandingBabyEng.pdf)
- Pediatric Nutrition Handbook 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, American Academy of Pediatrics, 2009

---

## Resources:

- The following materials may be ordered from the pamphlet library. Materials with a website listed may also be accessed at the Kentucky Cabinet of Health and Family Services Nutrition Services Branch Nutrition Education Materials website <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/mch/ns/Nutrition+Education+Materials.htm> or direct links:
  - Kentucky Infant Feeding Guide Birth to Four Months  
<http://chfs.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/45A92B90-A056-41FF-ACCA-C8A17A858F93/0/04moKYInfantfeedingGuiderev2009.pdf>
  - Kentucky Infant Feeding Guide Four to Eight Months  
<http://chfs.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/E89EC653-4FEA-46BE-88D7-65AADE90830B/0/48moKYInfantFdgGuiderev2009.pdf>
  - Kentucky Infant Feeding Guide Eight to Twelve Months  
<http://chfs.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/ABB9B703-D890-4BEE-BB86-CD95951F5577/0/912moKYInfantFeedingGuiderev2009.pdf>
  - I Eat Homemade Baby Food Because...