

# The Essentials of Infant & Young Child Feeding



Stage	Milk Feeding	Transitional Feeding	Eating Family Meals
Age	0 to around 6 months	6 to 18-24 months	2 years and beyond
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusive breastfeeding</li> <li>• Infant formula as an inferior but the only alternative if breastfeeding is not opted for</li> <li>• Avoid any other food earlier than 4 months of age to prevent sensitization to food allergens</li> </ul>	<p><b>Milk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue breastfeeding till 2 years of age and beyond while introducing solid foods, or</li> <li>• Infant formula feeding for babies &lt;12 months; cow milk (full-fat) &gt;12 months old if the diet contains a variety of iron-rich foods</li> </ul> <p><b>Complementary food</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include iron-rich foods from 6 months onwards</li> <li>• Include foods that are nutrient-rich so that solid foods can gradually replace milk feeding</li> <li>• Offer food with texture, progressing from smooth to lumpy, according to the baby's oro-motor skill development. Most children should be eating food with small lumps by 10 months</li> <li>• Continue introducing new foods to build up a variety in the diet by around 12 to 18 months of age</li> <li>• Limit salt intake</li> <li>• Avoid sugary drinks and limit intake of fruit juice (&lt; 120 ml per day)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balanced diet with a variety of food from 5 major food groups</li> <li>• Share family food, give smaller pieces if the food is tough</li> <li>• Parents decide what foods are available on the dining table, and offer choices</li> <li>• Milk –               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue breastfeeding, or</li> <li>▪ Reduced fat milk or calcium fortified soy milk</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Limit salt intake</li> <li>• Offer vegetable and whole fruit in place of juice</li> <li>• Offer water and avoid sugary drinks</li> </ul>
How much	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by the baby's satiety cues (Biological needs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow the child to decide how much to eat and feed according to hunger / satiety cues</li> <li>• Volume of Milk: 500 to 600 ml at 9 to 12 months, 360 to 480 ml after 12 months. Gradually reduce the amount of milk feeding so that the child eats more solid food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow the child to decide how much to eat</li> <li>• Milk – limit to &lt; 480 ml</li> </ul>
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feed when the baby is hungry (Biological needs)</li> <li>• Nighttime feedings are usually not needed after 4 to 6 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop night feeding by 6 to 9 months</li> <li>• 3 regular main meals &amp; 2 to 3 snacks after 1 year of age</li> <li>• Transition to family mealtime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 regular main meals &amp; 2 to 3 snacks at intervals of at least 2 hours</li> <li>• Adapt to family meal time</li> </ul>
Where		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular seat at a regular site</li> <li>• A high chair or booster chair is preferred</li> <li>• Environment is free from any distraction – no TV, electronic devices or toys</li> <li>• Include baby at the table for family meals after 8 to 9 months old</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit at dining table and eat with family members</li> <li>• Environment is free from any distraction – no TV, electronic devices or toys</li> </ul>
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fed by caregivers</li> <li>• Direct breastfeeding (Breastmilk can be fed by cup, spoon, syringe or bottle if feeding on the breast is not feasible)</li> <li>• Formula milk fed by bottle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Parallel feeding” – fed by caregiver &amp; encourage the children to self-feed</li> <li>• Milestones of self Feeding</li> <li>• Finger feeding – 8 months</li> <li>• Using spoon to feed self by 18 to 24 months</li> <li>• Using a fork – after 12 months</li> <li>• Introduce cup between 7 and 9 months</li> <li>• Stop using the bottle for drinking milk between 12 and 18 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat independently under adult supervision</li> <li>• Use cup for drinking, spoon for eating, learn to use chopsticks</li> <li>• Establish meal time rules to manage mealtime behaviours</li> </ul>