

Union Avenue Pediatrics

DIET FOR THE 10 MONTH OLD INFANT

By 10 months of age children are eager to feed themselves and increasingly capable of handling finger foods and a cup. They may need reminding to chew and swallow before their mouths are filled to choking. A cup with a lid decreases the expected spilled milk. Food explosions and trial food drops to the floor are a part of learning how to eat independently. New food types and textures are fun to experiment with. The ego boost from being able to feed oneself is tremendous.

Milk and other liquids. Unless there is a problem of milk intolerance, most infants between 10 and 12 months of age may change to whole milk along with three good meals a day. Milk may be given from a cup at meals, gradually reducing the use of bottle or breast at these times, but continuing breast or bottle before nap and bedtime. Generally 20 ounces of milk a day is enough. Begin to encourage drinking water when thirsty. Juice may be used occasionally, but still may be diluted with water and should not be given over 3 or 4 ounces daily. Do not start giving babies Koolaid, Tang, fruit punch, soda pop and other sweet drinks which interfere with the nutrition from solid foods. Nutritional experts recommend postponing 2% milk until 2 years of age.

Babies with previous milk intolerance, if they are now able to tolerate small amounts of cottage cheese and ice cream, may be allowed to try a little whole milk from a cup, and use it on cereal, gradually increasing the amount, if it is tolerated, over the next 2 or 3 months. We recommend not exceeding 20 ounces daily.

Foods. A balanced diet includes vegetables, fruits, cereals and other starchy foods, in addition to meat, fish and eggs. Vegetables are the most important. Fruit allowed should be less than the amount of vegetables eaten. Egg yolk (defer egg white until after 12 months) may be given 2 or 3 days a week. Finger foods can include meatloaf, meat balls, fish sticks, baked and canned fish, bits of thinly cut turkey, steak bones to chew on, cheese, cooked vegetables, ripe apple, pear and banana. Cheerios and other unsweetened dry cereals and unsweetened unsalted crackers are fun to eat. All these foods may be given whether or not a baby has teeth. but wait until later for spicy and fried foods. Avoid ketchup, peanut butter and chocolate at this age. Puddings, Jello or small oatmeal cookies may be used occasionally, but don't start frequent desserts other than fruit. Always give more vegetables than the total of fruits and other desserts. Continue the spoon foods mentioned at earlier ages, allowing your baby to guide the spoon to his mouth. Nuts, grapes, hard candy and uncooked carrot should be postponed to avoid choking. Supervise all feedings. When starting any chunky foods or with a more solid texture watch your baby carefully to be sure that he chews the food adequately before attempting to swallow and swallows before trying to eat more food. Choking emergencies are no fun for anyone!

Schedules. Three meals with the family each day, with breast or bottle before nap and bedtime is ideal but often unachievable. The family breakfast may be either too early or too late for some infants. Most children will be happier when fed at a regular time after awakening. Discuss meal times and content with your day care worker or baby-sitter. Your baby's supper may need to be earlier than the family dinner if he is to be happy and ready for bed on time. Most babies are happier if meal times are consistent from day to day. Keep meal time a happy time, try to keep the diet balanced, and enjoy your baby's growing independence in eating!