

Union Avenue Pediatrics

FEEDING THE TWO-WEEK OLD INFANT

Background. By two or three weeks of age babies' appetites often increase rather suddenly as they become more active, are awake longer, and start generating more body heat. By this time a baby's stomach capacity has generally increased so that daytime feedings are three or four hours apart, and many babies are able to sleep longer at night. Depending upon their size and hunger, babies may take from three to six ounces of breast milk or formula at a feeding.

Breast feeding. By now, your baby has probably found a predictable feeding schedule. If you awaken her at the same time every morning you will usually know when she will be awake, eating, or sleeping for the rest of the day. She will usually stay awake until the end of each feeding, and she may once a day stay awake between feedings. You will be very thirsty because of the amount of liquid she takes from you. Drink a variety of liquids, including several glasses of water, and milk if it agrees with you. Eat your vegetables very well, and also good amounts of protein foods such as meat, fish and cheese. Continue to restrict chocolate and spicy foods which may give your baby discomfort, rashes or diarrhea. Take your prenatal vitamins until your baby is at least three months old.

Formula. If your baby is bottle fed, iron supplemented formula should be given. If you use liquid concentrate formula, continue to dilute it with equal parts of water. If you use powdered formula, be sure to follow instructions carefully in mixing it. Use cow milk or soy formula, depending on your doctor's instructions. If you mix formula ahead of time for the entire day, continue to follow instructions given in the hospital. If you mix formula one bottle at a time, the can of liquid formula concentrate, after it is opened, should be kept in the refrigerator covered with a clean material such as Saran wrap. Nipples and bottles should be rinsed out immediately at the end of each feeding, and should be thoroughly scrubbed with soap and

water and scalded, or washed in the dishwasher. Tap water used for formula preparation generally need not be boiled. However, run the water faucet at least 2 minutes in the morning before preparing formula or food in order to decrease the risk of lead exposure from water sitting in soldered pipes overnight. If you do not have water from a public water district, or have any reason to doubt the safety of your water supply, we recommend the use of boiled or bottled water for formula preparation for at least the first two months. Some babies may wish to drink a small amount of water from a bottle once or twice a day, especially in hot dry weather. Any formula or water which has not been consumed within an hour of the beginning of a feeding should be discarded and the bottle thoroughly rinsed in order to discourage bacterial growth.

Food additions. We do not generally recommend the addition of juice, cereal or other foods to a baby's diet until four or five months of age. Too early addition of foods increases the risk of food allergies and anemia. Small infants fed from a spoon are also more likely to choke. However, if your baby seems to require more than 35 or 40 ounces of formula or needs to nurse more than eight or nine times a day, check with your pediatrician to be sure that he has the milk and feeding schedule which are best for him.

Colic. Even when parents try to make feeding times pleasant and relaxed, some babies by two weeks of age become quite uncomfortable because of swallowing excessive air or incomplete burping. Try to find the most comfortable position for you and your baby at feeding time. Get yourself into a relaxed frame of mind and try to soothe your baby. Find the best placement of the nipple in his mouth and, if he is bottle fed, choose those nipples which seem to deliver milk at just the right rate. If you hear your baby swallowing air, burp her to get the air up, and try a better nipple position. Many babies require burping three or four times during each feeding. Find the best position for burping your baby. If the last air bubble will not come up, try leaving your baby in the infant seat for 15 or 20 minutes and burp again, or place your baby on his right side for a while when putting him to bed. If your baby is still uncomfortable with gas or colic, please make an appointment with her doctor. (Also refer to our web page on this website for further discussion of colic)