how to teach colors to your child

At 6 months, start serving fruits and vegetables – strained or pureed. Then advance slowly to a lumpier consistency.

is your baby ready for some variety?

Your baby is a powerhouse of activity. Everything is a curiosity and a new experience. And food is quickly becoming her number one interest. She watches you eat. Her eyes follow your spoon or fork from plate to mouth and she reaches out for a cup or spoon. She uses her fingers now to pick up objects. These are all signs that she may be ready for thicker foods like fruits and vegetables.

The following questions and answers may help you learn more about when and how to introduce fruits and vegetables to your baby.

My baby enjoys cereal now. When should I introduce fruits and vegetables?

Allow time for your baby to enjoy the taste and texture of cereal for a few weeks before introducing any other foods.

Why start with vegetables instead of fruit?

People are born with a preference for sweet tastes. Offering vegetables first encourages babies to try other flavors and not to expect all foods to taste sweet.

How can I get my baby to eat vegetables?

Lucky you. You are starting with a clean slate. Your actions now may trigger a life-long love of vegetables. Here's how to teach your baby to enjoy them: Offer your baby a taste of a strained or pureed vegetable. If he seems to enjoy it over the course of three days, offer a different one on the fourth day. If, on the other hand, he rejects the vegetable, offer another favorite fruit or vegetable that day. On the next day, offer another small taste of the same vegetable. Continue in the same way for at least ten days. It takes time for some babies to learn to love vegetables–but that love starts now.

Can my baby have the same vegetables our family eats?

Your baby needs pureed or strained vegetables for the first few months but can gradually advance to lumpier textures. As your baby approaches his first birthday, let him in on the family fun. Mash a small portion of the family's vegetables well with a fork and offer it to him on his high-chair tray.

What about fruit juice? Isn't that the same as fruit?

No. Fruit, complete with fiber and texture, is a far better choice than fruit juice alone. Fruit juice can lead to an upset stomach, gas, or diarrhea so if you choose to offer it, do so only in small amounts occassionally. Additionally, fruit juice is very strong and sweet – so if you give it – it should be diluted with water to make it easier on your baby's sensitive stomach. And to protect your baby's little teeth, only offer juice in a cup–not a bottle.

How will I know when my baby is full?

By now you're familiar with your baby's cry when she's tired, hungry or angry. You will soon know her signs of fullness. She may turn her head away from food, sit back, or push food away. She may refuse to open her mouth. Perhaps she will simply slow down her eating. Which ever way she communicates that she's full, respect what she's telling you and follow her cues. "Just one more bite" is not necessary.

What vegetables and fruits tend to be baby favorites?

Babies enjoy mild flavored vegetables like avocado, squash, sweet potatoes, carrots, spinach, peas, and plantains. They also like applesauce, pears, bananas, prunes, mangos, papayas, and guavas.

sample meals

Morning

- 2 tablespoons prepared infant cereal

Afternoon

- 2 tablespoons strained vegetables or fruit

Evening

- 2 tablespoons strained vegetables or fruit; and
- 2 tablespoons prepared infant cereal

Six- to eight-month olds still rely mostly on breastmilk or formula to grow and develop. At this age, breastfed babies usually nurse six or more times a day. Formula-fed babies drink about 27 to 32 ounces a day.

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