



Infant and Toddler Nutrition

BASED ON CURRENT USDA DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICAN

Birth to 6 Months:

If possible, exclusively feed infants human milk for the first 6 months of life. If human milk is unavailable, feed an infant iron-fortified infant formula during the first year of life.

6 to 12 Months:

At 6 months, begin to introduce infants to nutrient-dense complementary foods – specifically foods rich in iron and zinc (this is especially important for infants who are fed human milk). Avoid foods and beverages with added sugars, such as juice. Limit food and beverages higher in sodium.

Proteins – needed for rapid brain development from infant to 2 years of age – long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (Omega-3 and 6); found in seafood, nuts, seeds, and oils. Ex. pureed beef, poultry, or fish. Give small bite-size pieces when age-appropriate, Greek yogurt, mixing in peanut butter to puree

Fruits and Vegetables – high in potassium (bananas, oranges, cooked spinach), vitamin A (melons, prunes, apricots, avocado, pumpkin, carrot), and vitamin C (yellow bell pepper, broccoli, guava). Beans, peas, and lentils – good sources of protein and dietary fiber

Dairy – can introduce yogurt and cheese including soy-based before 12 months, but infants should not consume cow milk before the age of 12 months. Vitamin D-fortified milk and soy beverages are recommended.

Grains – infant cereals fortified with iron include oat, barley, multigrain, and rice cereal. Providing whole grains more than refined grains promotes an increase in dietary fiber as well as potassium.

Estimated Calorie Needs per Day

12 months –

Males 800 kcals | Females 800 kcals

15 months –

Males 900 kcals | Females 800 kcals

18 months –

Males 1000 kcals | Females 900 kcals

21-23 months –

Males 1000 kcals | Females 1000 kcals

Common Nutrient Deficiencies

Main Nutrients of Concern:

Vitamin D: infants fed exclusively human milk are shown to have insufficient consumption of Vitamin D - it is recommended to supplement Vitamin D (400 IU per day)

Iron: born with adequate body stores until 6 months - will require an external source. Adequate intake of iron supports neurological development and immune functions

Other nutrients to keep in mind: protein, calcium, choline, potassium, and zinc

Average Intake vs Recommended Intake

Added Sugars

Recommended: AVOID

Avg. Intake: 104 kcals

Saturated Fats

Recommended: N/A

Avg. Intake: 167 kcals

Sodium

Recommended: 1200mg

Avg. Intake: 1586mg

- Taste preferences are being developed during this time – introducing overly sweet foods may develop a preference for overly sweet foods. It is best to avoid any products that have added sugars. This same concept applies to foods with sodium. It is best to choose fresh or low-sodium foods.
- Avoid honey and any unpasteurized foods/beverages – may contain harmful bacteria.
- Water can be given at 1 year of age to meet hydration needs
- 100% fruit juice can be given after 12 months, but not before – recommended no more than 4oz/day.
- Sugar-sweetened beverages (soda, juice drinks, sports drinks, or flavored water) – should not be given to children before the age of 2 years. Infants and toddlers do not have room in their diets for additional calories found in these beverages – consumption of these beverages may predispose children to consume more later in life.