

Breastfeeding at 6 Months

A Counseling Guide for Health Care Professionals

Counseling Message for Mothers	Background for Professionals
Feed your baby when you see signs of hunger (typically 5 to 6 times every 24 hours). As babies get older, they are more easily distracted during a feeding and may need gentle stimulation to refocus on feeding (e.g., rocking, patting, and stroking).	At this age, breastfed babies consume more at a feeding and go longer between feedings.
Breastfed babies may go several days without a bowel movement and then have a large soft stool.	It is normal for babies to go several days or even longer without a stool. The frequency, color and consistency of stools will vary based on baby's solid food and breastmilk intake.
<p>Introduce solid foods from a spoon around 6 months of age when baby is developmentally ready and shows interest in food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start with 1 - 2 teaspoons of a single ingredient iron-rich food such as infant cereal or pureed meat. Wait 3 to 5 days between new foods and observe for food reactions. 	<p>Developmental signs of readiness include sitting with support and controlling the head and neck. Breastfeed first to take the edge off baby's hunger, then offer solid food from a spoon. This helps baby learn how to move food in the mouth to swallow it. Solid foods will replace some of baby's breastmilk intake, but breastmilk provides most of baby's nutrition.</p>
<p>Continue to give your baby a vitamin D supplement. A daily supplement of 400 IU of vitamin D is recommended.</p> <p>Iron and fluoride supplements may also be needed, check with your baby's health care provider.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplemented breastfed babies need a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU per day unless they are consuming 32 ounces of infant formula per day. Breastfed babies should be introduced to iron rich foods (infant cereal or pureed meat) at 6 months. If not, check baby's iron level to determine whether a supplement is needed. Evaluate the adequacy of the fluoride content of the household drinking water. It is possible for babies to get too much or too little fluoride.
<p>Most prescriptions and over the counter medicines can be taken during breastfeeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check with health care providers (yours and your baby's) before taking anything. Tell your provider how important breastfeeding is to you and ask them to help you continue. <p>The Infant Risk Center at 806-352-2519 takes calls from parents and professionals on questions about medicines and herbs when breastfeeding. The website, www.infantrisk.org is a good resource as well.</p>	<p>Prescribe medications that expose the baby to the least amount of drug; i.e., those with the shortest half life, the lowest dose possible and time the dose related to the baby's typical feeding schedule.</p> <p>Check credible resources like Thomas Hale's book, <u>Medications and Mother's Milk</u> and the website Lactmed. If temporary weaning is necessary, provide instructions about how to maintain a full milk supply with a quality electric breast pump.</p>
Introduce a child-sized cup around 6 months of age. The cup can contain expressed breastmilk, water or iron-fortified formula. It is not recommended to give your baby fruit juice since juice offers no nutritional benefit over pureed fruit. If you do give fruit juice, limit the amount to 4 ounces per day and offer in a cup, not in a bottle.	Between 6-7 months babies can hold a cup and drink from it with help. Babies need to learn to drink from a cup, so limit the use of spill-proof lids with spouts. If using juice offer small amounts of a single flavor 100% fruit juice before trying mixed juices. Too much juice can cause diarrhea or prevent baby from eating healthy foods. Juice in a bottle contributes to tooth decay.



Breastfeeding At 6 Months (continued)

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<p>Most breastfeeding babies do not need formula. If formula supplementation is desired, offer iron-fortified infant formula.</p>	<p>Support breastfeeding and encourage as much breastmilk as possible. If the parents choose to supplement, recommend an iron-fortified formula until the baby's first birthday. If baby is drinking from a cup, encourage parents to offer formula in a cup instead of using a bottle.</p>
<p>You can continue breastfeeding or feeding pumped breastmilk if you return to work or school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose child care that is supportive of your choice to breastfeed. • Make arrangements for safe storage of your expressed breastmilk. • Introduce your baby to drinking from a bottle and to being fed by someone else. • Breastfeed regularly whenever you are with baby. <p>The healthiest choice for your baby is to continue breastfeeding with complimentary foods without formula supplementation.</p>	<p>Breastfeeding mothers have several options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastfeed baby during work or school (child care provider is on-site or nearby). • Breastfeed when with baby and collect/store breastmilk for feedings when apart. • Breastfeed when with baby and formula feed when apart. <p>Tell mothers how to safely store expressed breastmilk. Recommendations can be found at the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine website (www.bfmed.org) or the American Academy of Pediatrics website (www.aap.org)</p>
<p>It is not necessary to wean from the breast when your baby has teeth.</p> <p>Babies may bite while breastfeeding due to teething discomfort or if their mothers are doing other things (e.g., talking on the phone) and not interacting with them.</p>	<p>If baby chews or bites at the breast recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing baby from the breast and tell the baby "No." If baby is still hungry, offer the breast again. If biting continues, remove baby from the breast and end the feeding. Baby will soon learn that biting means breastfeeding will stop. • Ending feedings when baby loses interest. This helps prevent biting done by the playful baby. • Rubbing baby's gums with a clean finger or offering a clean cold or frozen washcloth or teething ring before feeding to soothe swollen gums.
<p>Experts recommend breastfeeding for at least one year. If you choose to stop breastfeeding, gradual weaning is easiest for you and your baby.</p>	<p>If mothers choose to wean, encourage them to initiate weaning gradually by replacing one feeding with formula for 2-3 days. This allows her milk supply to decrease slowly without fullness and discomfort. Mothers can continue to wean at their own pace by replacing one feeding at a time. Mothers can partially wean (i.e., continue breastfeeding several times per day) and maintain that feeding pattern for days or even weeks before deciding to replace another feeding.</p>
<p>Questions? Call one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified breastfeeding educators • Certified lactation consultants (IBCLC) • Health care professionals • La Leche League • Peer support groups • Physicians • WIC staff 	<p>Identify sources of support from family members, friends, and the community. Encourage mothers to call with questions or for advice.</p> <p>Identify community resources that can assess and recommend strategies to help with any breastfeeding problems.</p>

