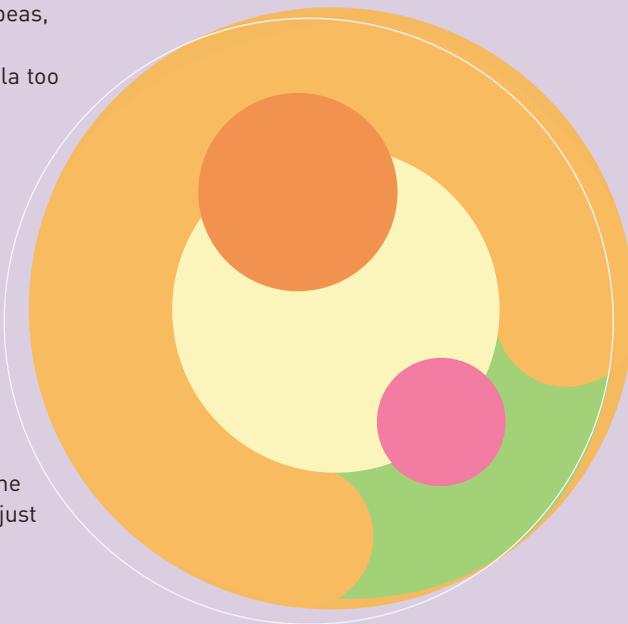


### The Don'ts of Feeding/Eating

- Don't feed your baby honey or foods that contain honey during the first year. Honey can cause illness in babies under one year old. Don't feed your baby eggs during the first year. They may cause food allergies.
- Don't give babies or toddlers anything that is difficult to swallow including: nuts, peanuts, seeds, grapes, popcorn, hotdogs, uncooked carrots, peas, corn – your baby could choke on these foods!
- Don't heat bottles in the microwave. This can make the formula too hot and can destroy some of the vitamins/minerals.
- Don't give babies or toddlers fast foods, chips, candy, soda or other sweets. These foods contain too much sugar or fat for your baby. Instead, provide healthy choices such as fresh fruits, vegetables, or graham or teething crackers.
- Don't give your child soda, tea, coffee or fruit drinks that are not 100% juice. These drinks contain a lot of sugar, artificial sweeteners or other ingredients that are not healthy. Give your child water instead.
- Don't feed your child more or less than she wants. Young children's appetites can vary widely from day to day. Good eating habits start young.
- When your baby or toddler cries or fusses, don't assume that he is hungry. He may want you to play with him, comfort him, or just pay attention to him.



*When your baby makes a mess, keep in mind how young he is. It is normal for babies to smear their food and drop things off the high chair tray. Keep in mind that this is a way that he is learning.*

*If you are a parent, share this with your child's caregiver. If you are a caregiver, share this with the child's parent(s). Thank you!*

## HEALTHY EATING

This brochure is the eighth in an eight-part series on fun and learning with your baby or toddler:

1. Care for Yourself
2. Cuddle, Talk, and Read with Your Child
3. How Your Child Develops
4. Be Playful with Your Child
5. Show Your Child the World
6. Teach Self Control
7. Practice Health and Safety
8. Healthy Eating

"Keys to Great Caregiving" has been adapted for use in Connecticut from "Keys To Great Parenting", University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

To request Keys brochures call 203-207-3267 or visit: [www.thekeys.uconn.edu](http://www.thekeys.uconn.edu)



Printing courtesy of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc.



8

## HEALTHY EATING



University of Connecticut

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM  
*College of Agriculture & Natural Resources*

In partnership with 2-1-1 Child Care Infoline,  
Connecticut Department of Social Services,  
Danbury Children First, Inc., EDUCATION CONNECTION,  
New Haven School Readiness Council

## HEALTHY EATING

Successful feeding experiences help form a strong, trusting bond between you and your child. Give your child your full attention, and don't worry if she makes a mess.

To keep your baby or toddler safe as well as happy, stay with him while he is eating. Never leave your baby or toddler alone while he is feeding. It is very easy for young children to choke.

### The Do's of Healthy Eating

- Most doctors recommend that new mothers breastfeed their infants for a minimum of 6 months if possible. Breastfeeding may reduce the baby's risk of developing allergies, asthma, infections, and other illnesses.
  - Good sources of breastfeeding information include your doctor, health care professionals or lactation consultants. For help or to find a lactation consultant in your area, call La Leche League at 800 LALECHE (800-525-3243).
  - If you choose not to breastfeed, you can use an appropriate infant formula. Check with your baby's doctor about which infant formula is best for your baby.
  - Feed your baby only breast milk or infant formula until he is between 4 and 6 months old. Breast milk or formula should be your baby's main source of nutrition until he is about one year old.
  - Most doctors recommend that you start giving your baby soft foods between 4 and 6 months. Check with your own doctor because not all babies are ready to start soft foods at the same age.
- Signs that show your baby may be ready for soft foods:
    - Controls head muscles and sits up with support
    - Wants to breastfeed more than 8-10 times within 24 hours or takes more than 52 oz. formula
    - Still hungry after feedings
    - Stays awake for longer periods
    - Able to take food from a spoon and swallow it
  - Rice cereal mixed with breast milk or formula is the first soft food usually recommended by doctors. It is easily digested, and most babies are not allergic to it.
  - Feed soft foods with a spoon, not in a bottle.
  - Slowly introduce other foods such as well-mashed carrots, bananas and sweet potatoes. Gradually add dark green and yellow vegetables at age 6 months.
  - After you give your child a new food, wait at least three days before adding another new food. During those three days, watch for allergic reactions such as rashes, diarrhea, vomiting, coughs or runny nose, or trouble with breathing. Check with your doctor if your baby shows any of these symptoms.
  - Make mealtime a learning time. Talk to your baby about what she is eating. Tell her how special she is and how the nutritious foods will keep her healthy. She will not understand everything that you say but she will love listening to your voice.
  - From about 6 months of age, your baby can probably eat the following servings:
    - Breast milk, every 3 to 4 hours, or 23-37 ounces of infant formula
    - 6-8 tablespoons of infant cereal, such as rice, oat, or barley
    - 1-4 ounces of 100% fruit juice, such as apple juice
    - 1-4 tablespoons of strained vegetables
    - 1-4 tablespoons of strained fruits
  - From about 9 months of age, your baby can eat larger amounts and additional foods:
    - Breast milk, every 4-5 hours, or 24-31 ounces of infant formula
    - 6-12 tablespoons of infant cereal
    - 3-4 ounces of fruit juice
    - 3-6 tablespoons of soft, mashed vegetables
    - 3-6 tablespoons of soft, mashed fruits
    - Small servings of finger foods, such as soft fruit, cooked macaroni, or cooked vegetables
    - 2-4 tablespoons of meat, beans, peas, or lentils
    - Small serving of yogurt or cottage cheese
  - Serve your baby a variety of foods, not the same foods all of the time. Your baby's preferences can change from day to day.
  - If your child doesn't eat an entire jar of baby food at one feeding, you'll have leftovers. If you feed your child leftover food directly from the jar, the jar will contain bacteria that can grow and make your baby sick. Therefore, it is recommended that you do not feed your baby out of the jar and instead put servings into a bowl.
  - Between about 8-18 months, you can start to feed your baby semisolid foods including very small pieces of ripe banana, Cheerios, baby crackers, cooked pastas, cooked carrots, and cooked, well-mashed chicken, turkey, meat and fish. **Be sure that pieces are bite sized—no more than 1/2 inch cubes—to keep your baby from choking.**
  - From 18-24 months, your toddler can eat the same foods as the rest of the family as long as the food is mashed or cut into bite-sized pieces.
  - Offer a variety of nutritious foods so your toddler gets used to different tastes and gets all the nutrition she needs.
  - Give your toddler 5 to 6 small meals and water daily.

