

# STARTING FOODS

Following your baby's cues while building food confidence



## Signs Your Baby May Be Ready

- ✓ Can sit with support and hold head/neck steady
- ✓ Reduced tongue thrust (the tongue is not coming forward out of the mouth)
- ✓ Brings objects/hands to mouth
- ✓ Shows interest in food (watches you eat, leans forward)
- ✓ Can swallow safely and appropriately

Starting foods can feel exciting and scary! Many babies are **offered** puree between 4-6 months. **Readiness** matters more than age. Check these signs to see if your baby is ready to begin eating foods!

## Early Feeding = Exploration

During this time, feeding is about **skill building and discovery**, NOT about serving size. Messy is a means of learning. Let your child taste a variety of things, activating sweet, sour, bitter, and savory senses. **Active participation** involves allowing your child to touch, feel, hold, smear, crush, squeeze, and poke foods as they learn what it is! Exploring textures helps build the oral motor coordination and sensory awareness needed later for chewing and speech.

### Guidelines

- Baby should be sitting UP in a highchair for feeding to protect their airway
- Gagging and coughing are normal
- Choking or vomiting is **NOT\*** normal
- **Milk** is still the **primary nutrition** for the **first year**
- Intake varies day by day. Follow your baby's hunger cues

### Remember

- 💡 Feeding is one of your baby's first ways of communicating preferences, comfort, and curiosity
- Don't force it, follow your child. Calm, responsive feeding helps babies regulate and learn.
- Empower them with communication! Exclaim "yum!" when they like it, and "No thank you!" if they don't.

\*Ensure you know how to respond if baby is choking. **Do NOT stick finger in their mouth**- it will likely push it further back.

\*If your child is choking or vomiting often, seek help



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