



eat

Elizabeth Verdick
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Every day, in every way,
babies **eat**.



Banana, cereal,
milk, or toast . . .



Eating Tips for Parents and Care Providers

♥ For the first 6 months, babies nurse or bottle-feed. This is a time of close connection for you both. If you bottle-feed, cuddle your baby as you would if nursing. The warmth of your touch helps your baby learn you're there to meet his needs—that's essential for his emotional development.

★ Between 4 and 6 months, babies begin to hold up their heads without support and use their hands to guide objects to their mouths. You may want to start some solid foods, such as rice cereal; see what your pediatrician recommends. Once or twice a day, help your baby sit up, and offer a little of the cereal with a small spoon.

♥ Wait to introduce other foods until your baby is used to cereal. Then begin adding pureed vegetables, fruits, and meat. Introduce one new food at a time, trying it out for several days (even for a couple weeks) to see how your baby adjusts.

★ By the time they're 8 to 10 months, many babies can digest small amounts of finely chopped finger foods (bananas, cheese, graham crackers, or ground meat). Avoid hot dogs, whole grapes, popcorn, raw carrots, nuts, hard candy, or other foods that are easy to choke on. Avoid cereals with added sugar or sodium, too.

♥ Eat together and enjoy this special time. When you talk to your baby during meals, you're teaching about the pleasure of sharing food and conversation.

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