



**Centre Medical and
Surgical Associates, P.C.**
YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER FOR LIFE

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Feeding Guidelines for Early Infancy (0-6 months)

The first six months of your baby's life are simple in terms of choices for feeding. Breast milk, either from the breast or pumped and bottle-fed is the best source of nutrition for babies through 12 months of age. Formula is a reasonable alternative when breast milk is unavailable for reasons of personal choice or difficulties with nursing.

BREASTFEEDING

Breast milk has the ideal combination of calories and other nutrients needed for growth. In addition, breast milk contains antibodies to help boost the baby's immune system. It is natural, the healthiest for mom and baby, and a great way to promote bonding.

FORMULA FEEDING

There are several different types of formula which can be used depending on your baby's needs:

- **Milk based formulas** - Similac, Enfamil, Parent's Choice, Gentle Moments, (also come in lactose-free)
- **Soy based formulas** - Isomil, Prosobee, Carnation Soy, Parent's Choice Soy
- **Hypoallergenic formulas** - Alimentum, Nutramigen, Pregestimil, Carnation
- **Special formulas** - Prematurity (Neosure, Enfacare), Reflux (Enfamil AR), Diarrhea (Isomil DF)

For most babies, we recommend starting with one of the milk-based formulas. Should problems arise, please discuss the problems with us before changing formulas. Changing formulas frequently can be hard on your baby's gastrointestinal system and we suggest finding a formula and staying with it and consulting us should difficulties present. Some formulas are adding DHA and ARA (nutrients found in breast milk) to their formulas. While some studies suggest that this helps with visual acuity at one year, no long term data is available and while not harmful, the addition of DHA and ARA is not crucial to your baby's growth and development. No babies should use low-iron formula, iron is essential for normal growth and development.

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BABY'S DON'T NEED:

- **Water** - this can affect their electrolytes if given in large quantities. If clear liquids are needed due to vomiting or diarrhea, Pedialyte should be used.
- **Juice** - unless specified by your doctor, no juice is needed prior to 6 months of age
- **Cereal** - not a necessary component of your baby's diet during the first 6 months of life. Current recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) are to hold all solid foods until after 6 months. This is based on an increased prevalence for food allergies and some new studies looking at the possible increased risk of diabetes with earlier exposure to solids. We still don't have definitive answers with these questions, but in most children's cases it is preferable to wait until 6 months to introduce solids. If you decide to start cereal in the 4-6 month range, we recommend starting with rice cereal and staying with whole grain cereals (not mixed). Parents should look for cues that their child is ready for solid foods, i.e. they are difficult to satisfy, constantly reaching for food and able to sit up well (with support).
- **Supplements** - infants taking formula do not need any supplementation. The current recommendations from the AAP is for nursing babies to receive vitamin D supplementation (200 IU/day) by 2 months of age to help prevent rickets. The population in our practice is low risk for vitamin D deficiency so we are suggesting that all breastfed infants receive vitamin D supplementation by 6 months of age.