

Healthy Eating: 6-8 Months

In most cases, babies eat and eat and eat. So how do you know when they're eating too much?

"A child's stomach is the size of their fist. So, everybody thinks that a baby that's feeding is a healthy baby, but a lot of times they'll have a lot of throwing up associated with that because they're overfed."

An example Baby menu for a child 6-8 months of age can include for: Breakfast- Breast Milk / Oatmeal cereal / Banana; Lunch- Breast Milk / Split Peas or Lentils / Sweet potato; Dinner-Breast Milk/Chicken/Applesauce. There are many different kinds of cereals, meats, fruits, and vegetables to introduce to your child. It's important to remember to start off with just one item and work up to two and three. Take it slow and always puree the food, which can be done in a blender, before feeding. Nicole Valencia likes to make her own baby food but keeps a few jars on hand for on the go.

"I just freeze them in the freezer they're good for up to 6 months and it may take me 20-30 minutes to make one batch and that one batch may last me 2 or 3 months."

After your baby is handling pureed food for a while, try a slightly lumpier consistency. Don't forget meats, pastas, yogurts and cheese products. This will also be a good time to introduce water in the child's diet. Not juice.

"I think a lot of calories come from what the kids drink."

At 10 to 12 months, you can start introducing finger foods to your child.

"Part of the fun in that is just that – FUN. So, the baby is going to squish it, going to throw it, going to smash it all over their face, it's party time with food. (laughs) So for them it's about texture and smell and colors and feel, not only to eat it but to explore it."

For the little babies it's important that you do not feed your child a hot dog, whole grapes, nuts or any other round food item as these items are potential choking hazards and can obstruct their airway. Finger foods must be cut into very tiny pieces for your child's safety.

Some great finger foods that are also very nutritious are: Steamed vegetables – sweet potatoes, carrots, broccoli, zucchini; Whole grain bread, crackers, or cereal and fruits.

"If you are bringing into the house good greens, good meats and proteins – pretty much hitting all the categories of strong nutrition you should have no issue with having a normal, good nutritious background."

"I think it's very important for parents to understand that you set the example for them and if you have bad eating habits, it will transfer to your children. You have to be very careful that you lead by example. If you want them to eat broccoli, then you need to show them that you eat broccoli too."

Being physically active is as important as good nutrition for an overall healthy child.

"Babies are on the go all the time. They're moving everywhere, they love to move, you just give them a little space and they're going to bounce or sway or rock and dance with you. It doesn't take much, they're just loving movement."

Aisha loves to play and although she had a slow start, she's on her way to a healthy future. Her mom couldn't be more proud of her. She has this advice for other parents.

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“Don’t be too hard on yourself, you’re going to do the best that you can for your child. So, if something doesn’t work, just keep trying and don’t get discouraged.”

As for Nicole, she’s determined to give her children a strong foundation early on.

“It’s very important to me to instill in my children right now the importance of eating healthy and making sure they understand to make good food choices.”

The experts tell us from the moment your precious little ones take their first breaths you’re providing the building blocks for their lives. Each child is different and exploring new foods can be challenging. But be patient – giving your child healthy food choices and promoting a healthy lifestyle, starts them off right.