



# FEEDING MY INFANT: BIRTH TO 6 MONTHS

## Breastfeeding

- Human milk is the preferred food for infants.
- Exclusive breastfeeding is advised for the first 6 months of life, as able.
- Breastfeeding offers many benefits to both mother and infant.
- Breastfeeding does not have to be "all or nothing." Human milk and iron-fortified infant formula feeding can be combined, known as mixed feeding.
- Infants who are exclusively breastfed or mixed fed will need a vitamin D supplement (400 IU/day).
- There are many factors that can impact the ability to breastfeed, from low milk supply to demands in the workplace. Some of these challenges cannot be prevented, but there are many tips, resources, and supports to help overcome potential barriers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BREASTFEEDING, INCLUDING A LIST OF RESOURCES, CHECK OUT THE **BREASTFEEDING FACT SHEET.**

## Donor Human Milk

- If breastfeeding is not an option, expressed human milk (human milk removed either by hand or breast pump) from the infant's mother or an approved human milk bank should be considered.

MORE INFORMATION ON HUMAN MILK BANKS CAN BE FOUND AT:  
<https://www.fda.gov/science-research/pediatrics/use-donor-human-milk>

## Infant Formulas

- If human milk is not an option, iron-fortified infant formula should be used.

## Signs of Hunger and Fullness

- Your infant should typically be fed on demand, when they show signs of hunger, unless medically advised otherwise.
- Never force your infant to finish a bottle or food. Your infant is the best judge of how much to eat.

SIGNS OF HUNGER	SIGNS OF FULLNESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brings hands to mouth</li> <li>• Turns head towards breast or bottle</li> <li>• Puckers, smacks, or licks lips</li> <li>• Clenches hands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closes mouth</li> <li>• Turns head away from breast or bottle</li> <li>• Relaxes hands</li> </ul>



## Handling and Storing Human Milk and Infant Formula

### PROPER HANDLING

- Wash hands before expressing human milk and before preparing and feeding human milk or infant formula.
- When preparing infant formula, follow the instructions on the formula's label. Do not use after the "use by" date.
- When preparing powdered infant formula, make sure the water used is from a safe source.
- Warm human milk or infant formula safely by placing it in a sealed container under running warm water or in a bowl of warm water. Do not warm in the microwave.
- Discard leftovers after a feeding (within 2 hours for human milk, within 1 hour for infant formula).
- Clean all infant feeding supplies (such as bottles, nipples, and pump parts) after each use.

### PROPER STORAGE

- Refrigerate human milk within 4 hours of expressing and use within 4 days.
- Refrigerate prepared infant formula within 2 hours of preparing and use within 24 hours.
- Use thawed, previously frozen human milk within 24 hours. Never refreeze thawed human milk.
- Store infant formula containers indoors in a cool, dry, place.

## Introducing Solid Foods

Solid foods are introduced to infants when they are developmentally ready. This is typically around 6 months of age and not before 4 months of age.

### SIGNS OF READINESS

- Has control of head and neck
- Sits up, alone or with support
- Grasps small objects
- Brings objects to mouth
- Opens mouth for food
- Swallows food, moving food to the back of the tongue rather than pushing it back out onto the chin.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON INTRODUCING YOUR INFANT TO SOLIDS CHECK OUT THE **FEEDING MY INFANT: 6 TO 12 MONTHS** FACT SHEET.

## Did You Know?

- Cow's milk, plant-based milk alternatives, and juice should not be given until 12 months of age.
- Children under 12 months of age should never be given honey. It can cause infant botulism, a deadly disease.
- Always talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about feeding your infant.



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This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact the Montana Public Assistance Helpline at 1-888-706-1535 or [www.apply.mt.gov](http://www.apply.mt.gov). Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA/Veteran's Preference Employer and Provider of Educational Outreach.