

5. AMOUNT OF COMPLEMENTARY FOOD NEEDED. Start at 6 months of age with small amounts of food and increase the quantity as the child gets older, while maintaining frequent breastfeeding. The energy needs from complementary foods for infants with "average" breast milk intake in developing countries are approximately 200 kcal per day at 6-8 months of age, 300 kcal per day at 9-11 months of age, and 550 kcal per day at 12-23 months of age. In industrialized countries these estimates differ somewhat (130, 310 and 580 kcal/d at 6-8, 9-11 and 12-23 months, respectively) because of differences in average breast milk intake.

6. FOOD CONSISTENCY. Gradually increase food consistency and variety as the infant gets older, adapting to the infant's requirements and abilities. Infants can eat pureed, mashed and semi-solid foods beginning at six months. By 8 months most infants can also eat "finger foods" (snacks that can be eaten by children alone). By 12 months, most children can eat the same types of foods as consumed by the rest of the family (keeping in mind the need for nutrient-dense foods, as explained in #8 below). Avoid foods that may cause choking (i.e., items that have a shape and/or consistency that may cause them to become lodged in the trachea, such as nuts, grapes, raw carrots).

7. MEAL FREQUENCY AND ENERGY DENSITY. Increase the number of times that the child is fed complementary foods as he/she gets older. The appropriate number of feedings depends on the energy density of the local foods and the usual amounts consumed at each feeding. For the average healthy breastfed infant, meals of complementary foods should be provided 2-3 times per day at 6-8 months of age and 3-4 times per day at 9-11 and 12-24 months of age, with additional nutritious snacks (such as a piece of fruit or bread or chapatti with nut paste) offered 1-2 times per day, as desired. Snacks are defined as foods eaten between meals—usually self-fed, convenient and easy to prepare. If energy density or amount of food per meal is low, or the child is no longer breastfed, more frequent meals may be required.

8. NUTRIENT CONTENT OF COMPLEMENTARY FOODS. Feed a variety of foods to ensure that nutrient needs are met. Meat, poultry, fish or eggs should be eaten daily, or as often as possible. Vegetarian diets cannot meet nutrient needs at this age unless nutrient supplements or fortified products are used (see #9 below). Vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables should be eaten daily. Provide diets with adequate fat content. Avoid giving drinks with low nutrient value, such as tea, coffee and sugary drinks such as soda. Limit the amount of juice offered so as to avoid displacing more nutrient-rich foods.

9. USE OF VITAMIN-MINERAL SUPPLEMENTS OR FORTIFIED PRODUCTS FOR INFANT AND MOTHER. Use fortified complementary foods or vitamin-mineral supplements for the infant, as needed. In some populations, breastfeeding mothers may also need vitamin mineral supplements or fortified products, both for their own health and to ensure normal concentrations of certain nutrients (particularly vitamins) in their breast milk. [Such products may also be beneficial for pre-pregnant and pregnant women].

10. FEEDING DURING AND AFTER ILLNESS. Increase fluid intake during illness, including more frequent breastfeeding, and encourage the child to eat soft, varied, appetizing, favourite foods. After illness, give food more often than usual and encourage the child to eat more.

The two figures that follow, emphasize the need to support continued breastfeeding from 6 months to 2 years or longer to meet the baby's growing needs in addition to suitable complementary foods.