

Make Every Bite Count



The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines provide recommendations for infants and toddlers, an age group not included since the 1985 edition. Little ones have big nutrient needs, so making Every Bite Count is important.

For Older Infants

- Today, we look closely at recommendations for older infants -- babies between the ages of 6 and 11 months.
- At about six months, babies start to eat solid foods in addition to the breastmilk or infant formula they are drinking.

The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans advise caregivers to encourage older infants to eat a variety of nutrient-dense foods that fit within a family's preferences, cultural traditions, and budget. As solids are introduced, it's important to note that babies often need to try a new food 8-10 times before they will accept it. Caregivers should continue to offer new foods, especially fruits and vegetables.

Food groups for older infants:

- Protein foods: Think meats, poultry, eggs, seafood, and soy products.
- Vegetables and fruits
- Dairy: Try yogurt and cheese. Wait 12 months before giving cow's milk.
- Grains: An excellent option is infant cereals fortified with iron

Foods for older infants to avoid: added sugar and low/no-calorie sweeteners

- Higher-sodium foods (salty snacks, commercial toddler foods, processed meats)
- Honey or foods made with honey
- Unpasteurized juice, milk, yogurt, or cheese
- Beverages for older infants: Water is the only recommended beverage for infants.
- Babies who have started complementary solid foods can have up to 4–8 ounces of plain, fluoridated drinking water daily.

Infants under age one should generally NOT drink:

- Cow's milk or fortified soy milk
- Plant-based milk alternatives (soy, oat, rice, coconut, almond milk)
- Sugar-sweetened beverages (soda, juice drinks, sports drinks, flavored water)
- Caffeinated drinks

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Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov).