At eight months of age, your baby is curious about everything. This is a fun time for both of you. Your baby may surprise you with how well she can get around the house. Let her explore, but keep her safe. Try to let her explore and move around on her own, unless she is in danger or may hurt herself. Make your home as safe as possible for your baby. Join in the games that help her learn about her world.

FEEDING YOUR EIGHT-MONTH-OLD

Your baby is growing and has changing abilities with regards to eating. You can respond with a gradual increase in food texture and variety. When your baby goes on to table food—somewhere between seven and ten months—you will want to start adding meat to her diet.

Until now, your baby has been busy experimenting with the texture and flavors of cereal, vegetables, and fruits. He has gotten iron from infant cereal and plenty of protein from formula or breast milk. But as your baby works up to three meals a day, protein intake will decrease. Meat, poultry, and fish are great choices to replace this protein.

Introducing meat can be a challenge, because your baby only has a few teeth, and these teeth aren’t the ones needed to handle some types of meat. Some foods, like hamburger, fish, or tender poultry, won’t be a problem. Tougher meats probably need to be ground or cut very fine—in about 1/8-inch pieces. After cutting or grinding, you will probably need to add a little moisture—broth, water, or low-fat gravy.

Be sure you have advanced the texture of your baby’s food as she advances. Use a fork or potato masher to remove lumps. Again, although it will be a bit messy, your baby will happily consider these foods finger foods. As her skills advance and she can pick up foods with her fingers instead of palm-grasping them, she will become neater.

The next page lists baby feeding safety tips. Be sure to consider your baby’s skills and abilities when determining the foods to offer. During this time of transition, your challenge will be to keep up with your baby’s abilities while not offering textures and foods he can’t yet master.
FEEDING SAFETY TIPS

- Adult supervision is a MUST—your baby needs the safety of a grown-up watching closely while he is eating. It’s also a social time for him—and you!
- Remember to serve your baby’s food unseasoned (no added sugar, salt and/or other seasonings).
- Don’t give honey to a baby who is less than one year old.
- Avoid foods that are likely to cause choking—corn, nuts, popcorn, seeds, grapes, hot dogs (although hot dogs can be cut up to 1/8- to 1/4-inch pieces and served). Be sensitive to hot foods—they will seem extra hot to your baby! It’s okay to serve foods cold; most babies don’t mind.

All children grow, learn, and develop at different rates. The information in this brochure is considered typical for children of this age. If you do all you can to help children grow and develop now, they will have the best chance to do well in school and in life.

References: