Your baby is very interested in the world around him. The reaching and grasping that your baby has been doing in the past few months will be perfected in the coming weeks. Soon your baby will not only pick up a nearby rattle, but will shake it on purpose. And, along with your baby’s growing body, his personality is growing too!

FEEDING YOUR SIX-MONTH-OLD

Your six-month-old baby is starting to eat solid foods and appears to be interested in food and family at mealtime. After your baby is comfortable with iron-fortified baby cereal, begin adding fruits and vegetables to her diet. Some pediatricians recommend beginning with vegetables, to be sure these flavors are well accepted before the sweeter fruits are introduced. The main goal in adding vegetables and fruits is to gradually shift your baby’s primary source of vitamins A and C to solid foods and, eventually, away from formula or breast milk. Enjoy the bewildered look of amazement when your baby first tastes vegetables. You may want to start with pureed fresh or frozen cooked vegetables, or you may decide to buy commercial baby food. If you do prepare your own baby food, remember your baby’s excitement in the food comes from the food itself—there is no need to season your baby’s food. Avoid pureeing canned vegetables because they have too much sodium and/or salt. Babies don’t need salt, and it is too hard for their bodies to break down.

Remember to introduce new vegetables and fruits one at a time to be sure they are tolerated. For this reason, mixed foods—like mixed cereals, mixed vegetables, baby casserole, or dessert items—need to wait until your baby has tried each ingredient individually.
At this time, babies may be given small amounts of 100% fruit juice though juice provides no nutritional benefits over whole fruit. Moreover, whole fruits are rich in fiber and other nutrients not found in juice. Providing 100% fruit juice before this age could result in your baby not wanting nutrient-rich formula or breast milk. At this time, a 1/3 cup serving throughout the day of a vitamin C-rich 100% fruit juice is plenty.

Because juice is a very concentrated sweet, you may want to introduce it and a sippy drinking cup at the same time. It’s also a good idea to dilute fruit juice with water. This way, there is no chance for your baby’s teeth and mouth to be overexposed to the sugar and sweetness. She will still be so excited about the flavor of the juice, her ability to use a sippy cup will develop quickly! Never place fruit juice in a bottle and do not offer it at bedtime.

What kind of juice should you introduce first? Again, a single-flavor 100% fruit juice, not a blend of flavors, would be best until you are sure each separate ingredient does not cause an allergic reaction with your baby. Often, apple juice is the recommended first juice for baby, but be a label reader! Your baby’s apple juice should be 100% fruit juice and have added vitamin C. Check the nutrition facts label to be sure. Citrus fruit juice, like orange juice, is usually introduced later—at around age one—because it frequently causes an allergic reaction, stomachache, or diarrhea in a younger baby.

Your baby’s food patterns are starting to resemble those of older family members. He eats cereal at one or two feedings each day, drinks a vitamin C-rich 100% fruit juice from a sippy cup, and works to pick up small pieces of soft, “gummable” foods offered—probably vegetables separated from the family’s meal before seasoning or rice or oat cereals. Has your baby joined the family at mealtime yet? She will benefit so much from the social aspect of your meals, and she will definitely add life to each family meal.

FRUIT JUICE FACTS

- Best to offer from cup.
- Serve 100% juice—not juice drink.
- Look for vitamin C on the label.
- Don’t overdo! Three ounces of juice a day is enough—more may spoil your baby’s appetite.

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: