

Milestones in Motion

GUIDING FAMILIES THROUGH FEEDING



Tracking nutrition-related developmental milestones in WIC is important to help families support their child's growth and identify any concerns early on. Discussing nutrition-related developmental milestones with families counts as the nutrition education contact.

The timing of these milestones is relevant for healthy, full-term infants. Premature infants or infants with health issues may develop differently and require advice from doctors.

AGE

NUTRITION-RELATED MILESTONE

by 2 months

Remind families to feed only breast milk or formula at this age. They aren't ready for other foods, water or other drinks for about the first 6 months of life.



by 4 months

If hungry, opens mouth when they see breast or bottle. Holds head steady without support when you are holding them. Brings hand to mouth.

by 6 months

Puts things in their mouth to explore them and closes lips to show they don't want more food.

Advice for WIC Nutritionists:¹

When babies show signs of being developmentally ready—usually around 6 months—it is okay for families to slowly introduce soft foods. Babies may reject soft foods at first, and it's common for them to need 10 or more tries before accepting a food, often spread out over weeks or months.

Signs that a child is ready for soft foods include:²

- Sits up alone or with support
- Can control their head and neck
- Opens their mouth when you offer food
- Swallows food rather than pushes it back out onto their chin
- Brings objects to their mouth
- Tries to grasp small objects, such as toys or food
- Transfers food from the front to the back of their tongue to swallow

by 9 months

Sits without support.

by 1 year

Drinks from a cup without a lid, as you hold it and picks things up between thumb and pointer finger, like small bits of food.



by 15 months

Uses fingers to feed themselves some food.

by 2 years

Eats with a spoon and holds something in one hand while using the other hand; for example, holding a container and taking the lid off.

Says at least two words together, like, "More milk."

Advice for WIC Nutritionists:

Encourage parents to eat meals with their child when possible. Let the child see them enjoying healthy foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and drinking milk or water.

by 30 months

Advice for WIC Nutritionists:

Suggest offering children simple, healthy snack choices and letting them decide, with no more than two or three options.

by 3 years

Uses a fork.

by 4 years

Serves themselves food or pours water, with adult supervision.



For more information on developmental milestones that you can share with families, visit www.cdc.gov/ActEarly.