

# Look Who's Eating: Feeding Your Baby 7-9 months

---

**Who:** WIC parents and caregivers of infants 7-9 months of age

**Why:** Feeding practices during infancy influence food habits and health later in life. It is important to discuss the recommended feeding guidelines with parents and caregivers to promote proper growth, development and optimal health.

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

---

**Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will:

- Discuss balancing breastmilk or formula with solid food
- Identify appropriate food and textures based on infant's age and developmental stage
- List potentially dangerous foods that are not recommended
- Recognize when to introduce a cup

## Lesson

**Overview:**

1. Introduction
2. Concept: Balancing breastmilk or formula with solid food
3. Concept: Changing food textures as your baby grows
4. Concept: Foods to avoid
5. Concept: Introducing a cup
6. Closing

**Materials:** Provided by WIC State:

- National WIC Association Magazine: Let's eat!
- OPTIONAL: Baby's First Cup

Provided by Local Agency:

- Whiteboard or flip chart
- Dry erase markers
- Stages of Food Texture Activity Sheet

## Introduction

- Greet the group. Introduce yourself and your role
- Set the agenda
  - Give an overview of the class session and length of class time
- Introductions and/or icebreaker to anchor participants in the topic
  - Make sure to include children in the introductions activity
  - **OPTIONAL:** If class time is limited, the facilitator can assess participant's needs and tailor the class by selecting relevant concepts to cover
    - Write the four class concepts on a flipchart/whiteboard.


"Hello everybody! My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am a WIC CPA and would like to welcome you to our 'Look Who's Eating' class. Today we will focus on 7 - 9 months-old babies and we will discuss balancing breastmilk or formula with solid foods, changing food textures as your baby grows, foods to avoid because they are potentially dangerous and introducing a cup. Caretakers often have questions about what they need to do to raise a healthy baby. On the board I have written common concerns that caretakers share for infants this age."

- Bring attention to the flipchart and read the concerns out loud:

"Common concerns are how to balance breastmilk or formula with solid foods, appropriate textures for this age, foods that are not recommended, and when to introduce a cup. Take a minute to think about each topic. You will get to decide what we talk about today. Let's choose 3 topics as a group and if time allows, we can discuss more."

- The facilitator can point to each topic and ask participants to raise their hand if they are interested in learning more about that topic. The topics with the most raised hands are the topics that will be discussed in class.
- **OR** The facilitator can provide participants with sticky notes and ask participants to place 3 sticky notes on the board next to the topics they are interested in learning more about.

"Thank you for picking the topics. Let's start talking about \_\_\_\_\_"

 If all topics will be discussed, this icebreaker can be used.

Ask participants to turn to their neighbor and share their name, their baby's name, their baby's age and ....

- Share something new baby has been doing
- Share methods of finding time to eat and sleep with an infant
- Share what foods you have introduced
- Share if baby has a favorite food

After about 1 – 2 minutes, ask each participant to share the name of their activity partner, name and age of baby and the answer to the icebreaker discussion question.

### Concept: Balancing Breastmilk or Formula with Solid Food

- "What are some concerns you have about balancing breastmilk or formula with solid foods?"
  - Pause, allow time for participants to respond
  - **OPTIONAL:** If participants are quiet, ask participants to share concerns with their neighbor. After a few minutes of sharing, ask if anyone would like to share with the rest of the class.
  - Possible responses include:
    - Giving too much breastmilk/formula and/or solid food
    - Giving too little breastmilk/formula and/or solid food
    - Not knowing how much breastmilk/formula and solid food to give
- "During the first year of life, your baby will slowly transition from a diet of only breastmilk and/or formula to a diet that is closer to a child's. Between 6 and 12 months, most infants begin eating more complementary foods and decreasing the amount of breastmilk or formula they drink. There is no specific rule that states exactly how much or how often babies should be

eating. But there are some ways to know your baby is eating enough. What are some way you know your baby is eating enough?"

- Pause, allow time for participants to respond
  - **OPTIONAL:** Write down responses on the whiteboard or flipchart.
- If participants do not respond, the facilitator can start by discussing hunger and fullness cues.

"One way moms tell me they know their baby is eating enough is by paying attention to hunger and fullness cues."

- On the whiteboard or flipchart, write "Hunger Cues"  
Hunger cues include:
  - ✓ Becoming excited when they are put in the highchair
  - ✓ Sucks or smacks lips
  - ✓ Opens mouth at sight of food
  - ✓ Puts fist in mouth or cries
  - ✓ Leans forward towards or reaches for food "
- Write "Fullness Cues" on the whiteboard or flipchart

"What about fullness cues? What are some fullness cues your baby gives you?"

Write down fullness cues as participants provide them and add additional cues as needed:

- ✓ Slows down pace of eating
- ✓ Turns head away
- ✓ Closes mouth
- ✓ Covers mouth with hands
- ✓ Fusses or cries
- ✓ Falls asleep
- ✓ Spits out food

"In addition to recognizing hunger and fullness cues, if the doctor says your baby is gaining weight and growing well, you know your baby is getting enough to eat."

"What questions do you have about the information we just covered?"

### **FACTS ABOUT BALANCING BREASTMILK OR FORMULA AND SOLID FOODS:**

Caretakers may have more specific questions about how much breastmilk or formula they should give their infant and how often. You may find it useful to write the following information on the whiteboard or flipchart and discuss with participants, as necessary.

- Breastmilk or iron-fortified formula is still the most important source of nutrition
  - Babies need approximately 24 – 32 ounces of breastmilk or formula a day
- At this age, babies often feed at least 4 – 6 ounces at a time
- Babies tummies can hold 6 – 8 ounces at a time
- Typical portion sizes and daily intake for full-term infants, 6 – 8 months old
  - Breastmilk/infant formula, 6 – 8 ounces, 3 – 5 feedings per day
  - Infant cereal, 2 – 4 tablespoons, 2 feedings per day
  - Whole wheat toast, ½ slice, 1 feeding per day
  - Fruit or vegetables, 2 – 3 tablespoons, 1 – 2 feedings per day
  - Meat or beans, 1 – 2 tablespoons, 1 – 2 feedings per day
- Reminder! Encourage parents and caregivers to respond to their infant's hunger and fullness cues. Reassure them they can know their infant is eating enough by following hunger and fullness cues and if the doctor says they are gaining weight and growing well.

### **Concept: Changing Food Textures as your Baby Grows**

- "Your baby will move through four different stages of food textures. Let's talk a little bit about each stage by completing a learning activity."
  - Offer the *Stages of Food Texture Activity* sheet and NWA's *Let's Eat* magazine.
  - Instruct participants to complete the activity sheet with a partner. For each texture of food at the top of the chart, place a check mark in the box of the age they think babies are ready for that food texture.
- "Ok, let's review. Moving from left to right at the top of the chart, does anyone want to share what age they think babies are ready for ground or soft chopped foods, such as soft cooked vegetables?"
  - Pause, allow time for participants to respond.
  - Remind participants the activity is not moving in order of age because the activity is checking their knowledge.

"Yes, correct! Babies are ready for ground or soft chopped foods at about 8 to 10 months. To look at some example of foods your baby may like, please turn to page 8 of the *Let's Eat* magazine. Examples are pictured at the bottom of the page - soft chopped vegetables, like carrots or peeled fruit like papaya, chopped cooked eggs, chopped tofu or plain yogurt mixed with chopped fruit. Just remember to cut everything up into small pieces. Does anyone have any other examples of foods their baby likes or might like at this age?"

  - Pause, allow time for participants to share.
- "Ok, what age did you check for introducing mashed foods?"
  - Allow time for participants to respond. Affirm about 6 to 8 months is when infants are ready for mashed foods.

"About 6 or 7 to 8 months is when your baby may be ready to try mashed foods in addition to pureed foods. You can use the back of a fork to mash foods into a smooth texture with a few tiny lumps. If you turn to page 6 of the *Let's Eat* magazine, at the bottom you will see examples mashed foods. I know we have some 7 and 8-month-old infants in class today - raise your hand if your baby is eating some of these foods already."

- Ask participants to share what their baby's favorite food is right now.

"That's great! Ok, next at the top of the chart is smooth, strained or pureed food. This is an easy one to answer because many of you have already introduced this texture of food to your baby. Examples of these smooth foods can be found on page 5 of the *Let's Eat* magazine. We won't spend too much time talking about this texture, but does anyone have any questions before we review the last food texture on the activity sheet?"

- "The last texture is small pieces of finger like foods. Your baby may be ready for this texture, in addition to everything else he is already eating, at about 10 to 12 months. Start with soft foods at first and then move on to firmer textures when he's ready. Let's turn to page 10 of the magazine and review some examples of new foods to try at this age."
  - Point to each picture and review the example.

"Any questions about introducing this texture of food or any other texture we discussed? Remember, each stage gets a little more challenging so it's important to make sure your baby can chew and swallow food from one stage before moving to the next stage."

#### Concept: Foods to Avoid

- "Now that we've talked about different food textures to introduce to your baby, let's take a minute to talk about foods to avoid. Parents often have many concerns regarding what not to feed their baby. Let's start the conversation by turning to page 5 of the *Let's Eat* magazine. I would like to point out the table to the top right of the page 'What NOT to Feed Your Baby'. Go ahead and turn to the person next to you and take turns telling each other what food to avoid feeding their baby and why. For example, 'It's important to avoid giving your baby cow's milk because their tummies can't yet digest it.'
  - If class is small, facilitator can review each food and why it is important to avoid.
- "There is one item not listed here. Can anyone think what it might be? Yes, juice - the American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend juice for infants, under the age of 1."

"Does anything surprise you about what foods to avoid?"

Parents may want more information about making healthier choices when selecting baby foods and feeding their baby. Consider providing the following information:

- Avoid buying commercial baby food with fillers, such as modified food starch or tapioca.
- Baby food desserts, such as commercial cakes, cookies, candies and sweet pastries are not recommended because of the added sugar.
- Avoid foods with chocolate, artificial sweeteners and caffeine.
- Keep foods plain because your baby does not need added salt, sugar, butter or other flavors.
- Place baby food from a jar into a bowl and feed your baby from the bowl.
  - Germs from his mouth transferred from the spoon can spoil the food.
  - Store opened jar or container in the refrigerator for no more than 2 days.

#### Concept: Introducing a Cup

- "Let's talk about introducing your baby to the cup. Raise your hand if you've already introduced your baby to the cup."
  - The amount of information provided in this concept can be tailored based on how many participants raise their hand.

"That's great! Those who have started may be able to provide us with some great tips for introducing the cup. But first, let's learn a little bit more about giving your baby the cup."

  - Instruct participants to turn to page 7 of the Let's Eat magazine
- "Let's take the *Starting a Cup* quiz to learn a little bit more about when your baby is ready for a cup and why it is so important for them to learn to use a cup. Question one: When is your baby ready to start learning to use the cup? When he can sit up on his own. When he can hold his head steady for long periods of time. When he can put his lower lip around the mouth of a cup or when he can do all the above. What do you think?"
  - Pause, allow for a response.

"Correct! Your baby is ready for a cup when he can sit on his own, hold his head steady for long periods of time and put his lower lip around the mouth of a cup. At first your baby will need help learning to use a cup. Beware - he will spill! But be patient and let him practice. He will learn soon enough."

"Ok, next question. Why is it important for your baby to learn to use a cup? Possible answers are: using a bottle too long can cause tooth decay. Using a bottle too long can make baby gain too much weight. Using a bottle too long can lead to ear infections. Or all of the above. Go ahead and circle the answer you think is correct. Would anyone like to share?"

"Yes, correct! The answer is all of the above. Let your baby use a cup more and more. It is best for him to stop using a bottle around his first birthday. And if anyone has any questions about caring for your baby's teeth to avoid tooth decay, you can certainly ask after we are done with this activity. Finally, the third question: What can your baby drink from a cup? Breastmilk. Formula. Water. Or any of the above? Circle what you think is the correct answer."

  - Pause, all time for participants to answer.

"If you chose D - any of the above then you picked the correct answer. Start with small amounts of liquid in a cup. You can serve more as your baby gets used to drinking from a cup."

"What questions do you have about the information we just covered?"

- "What are some challenges you might come across when trying to start a cup? If you have already started the cup, what are the challenges you have experienced? Do you have any tips?"

- Allow time for participants to respond.

**OPTIONAL:** Write responses on the whiteboard or flipchart.

**Possible challenges include:**

- ✓ Baby is not interested in the cup
- ✓ Baby gets too much liquid in her mouth
- ✓ Baby wants to walk around with the cup
- ✓ Baby doesn't like any of the cups offered
- ✓ Baby spills

- Encourage moms with experience to offer tips. Write tips on the whiteboard or flipchart.

**Possible tips include:**

- ✓ Help your baby hold the cup as she learns.
- ✓ Give your baby liquid very slowly so the infant can take her time swallowing.
- ✓ Cups with spill-proof lids are not recommended because they encourage your baby to carry the cup and drink more. They also put your baby at higher risk for developing dental carries.
- ✓ Offer small amounts at first, about 1 – 2 oz, until your baby can drink without spilling.

"Great tips! What questions do you have?"

**TIPS FOR HEALTHY TEETH**

- Clean baby's teeth and gums every day, especially after feedings and before bed
  - Use a small, soft child's toothbrush with water only. Use a clean damp washcloth or gauze for areas without teeth.
- If using a pacifier, never dip it in anything sweet, like sugar or honey.
- Give only breast milk, formula, or water in the bottle. Never put sweet drinks, such as juice or soda, in the bottle.
- Wait until 12 months to offer juice in a cup, never from a bottle. Give no more than 4 ounces of 100% juice
- Parents should schedule their child's first dentist appointment by age 1.
- Your pediatrician or pediatric dentist can tell you whether there is a need for fluoride supplements and prescribe the appropriate dosage.

## Closing

- **Summarize:**  
"We've covered a lot of material today about feeding your baby. We talked about balancing breastmilk or formula with solid food, changing food textures as your baby grows and foods to avoid. We also talk about introducing a cup. Does anybody have any questions?"
- Have participants write down a goal or something they would like to work on that they learned from the class. Input this into WISH to follow up on at the next appointment.
- Thank participants for their participation
  - **Example:** "It was really great having you all here today. You all had some great suggestions and ideas. I look forward to seeing you at our next class."