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Nutrition Nuggets

Healthy Eating for Infants

Healthy eating is important at every age. When it's time for solid foods, offer babies a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding on foods and beverages, choose options that are full of nutrients and lower in sodium and avoid added sugars. Start with these tips:

- * **Feeding your young baby.** If possible, feed your baby only breast milk from birth to about 6 months of age, and continue through at least the first year of life, longer if desired. If breast milk is unavailable, feed your baby iron-fortified infant formula. Talk to your healthcare provider about vitamin D supplements for your baby.
- * **Look for cues.** When babies are hungry, they usually let you know. But fullness cues are not as obvious. Babies may be full if they close their mouth, turn their head away from breast or bottle, or relax their hands. Recognizing and responding to these cues helps children learn how to self regulate their intake.
- * **Starting solid foods.** At about 6 months, infants may show signs that they're ready for solid foods, such as bringing objects to the mouth or swallowing food rather than pushing it out. Do not put infant cereal or other solid foods in an infant's bottle, but small amounts of water may also be introduced when your baby starts solid foods.
- * **Serving first foods.** Introduce a variety of foods, flavors, and textures from all food groups. Include foods rich in iron and zinc, particularly for breastfed infants. Examples include lean meats, fortified infant cereals, and beans.
- * **Prevent choking.** Make sure your baby is sitting in a highchair or other safe, supervised place for meals and snacks. Offer foods that are the appropriate size, consistency, and shape for your child's age and eating skills.
- * **Serving safe foods.** Avoid feeding your baby any foods that contain raw or cooked honey. Honey can contain bacteria that could cause serious illness or death among infants. Also avoid unpasteurized foods or beverages, such as juices, milk, yogurt, or cheeses, as they could contain harmful bacteria.



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Chicken Chimichanga

16 oz chicken breast, skinless
1 cup shredded cheese
1/2 tsp mild taco seasoning
1 tsp vegetable oil
1/2 cup mild salsa
9 100% 6-inch whole wheat tortillas

Preheat oven to 350° F. In a medium saucepan, boil the chicken for 10-15 minutes or until fully cooked and tender. Remove chicken from pot and place in a bowl. Shred the chicken. Add the cheese, taco seasoning, oil, and salsa. Mix until all the chicken is coated and cheese is distributed throughout. Scoop 1/3 cup of the mixture into each tortilla. Fold sides of the tortilla and then tightly roll into a burrito shape. Spray the top of each tortilla with oil. Place tortillas in oven for 10-20 minutes or until golden brown.

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Healthy Iron Intake

In the United States, about 7% of children ages 1–5 have iron deficiency anemia and this number is even higher for children ages 1–2. Iron deficiency anemia occurs when there is not enough iron in the body to produce healthy red blood cells to carry oxygen throughout the body. Our bodies only need a small amount of iron, but without it, a child can appear pale in color; suffer from frequent headaches; or feel cranky, tired, and weak. Our partners at ICN review good sources of iron and how the CACFP Meal Pattern supports a healthy intake of iron.

CACFP Meal Patterns and Iron

Infants and Iron

Infants are born with a certain amount of iron in their bodies. Over time, they need additional iron from their diet for proper development. As the infant is developmentally ready, the CACFP Infant Meal Pattern allows for serving foods that are good sources of iron, such as iron-fortified infant cereal, meat, fish, poultry, eggs, and cooked dry beans and peas.

Transition From Infant to Toddler

As infants become toddlers, they transition from getting a large portion of calories from formula or breast milk to getting most of their calories and nutrients from food. You may notice that some toddlers rely on milk in a bottle or sippy cup to fill them up. While milk is a source of many nutrients, it is low in iron. Filling up on milk may increase the risk of iron deficiency anemia. The CACFP meal pattern supports the transition to more iron-rich foods by requiring that all meal components be served starting at 1 year of age. Encouraging toddlers to eat all of the components offered in a meal can help them get more iron.

[Healthy Iron Intake - National CACFP Sponsors Association](#)

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