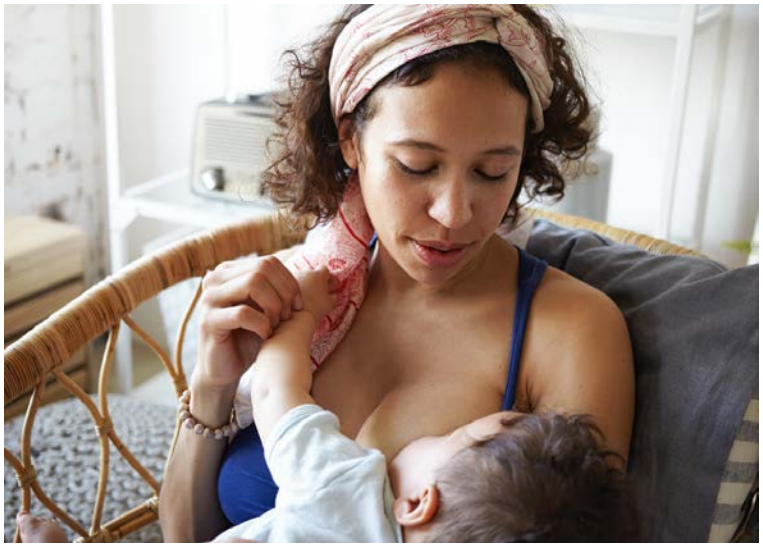
Your Child's First Foods

Healthy first foods make a difference in lifelong health



The first 1,000 days give us a chance to impact the rest of a child's life.
From conception to about age two, the period known as the first 1,000 days, is the most important time for growth and development. During this time, good nutrition can build a strong base for your child's future. One way to do this is by making sure a child's first foods are healthy. Even if you don't see it right away, healthy first foods help with good infant growth, healthy brain development, ability to fight illness and learning healthy eating habits.

A mix of healthy first foods like vegetables, fruits, grains and protein helps build a strong body and promotes eating habits that keep kids from gaining too much weight now, and from getting diabetes or having heart problems later in life. We can protect our children's health with good first foods.

Healthy first foods promote lifelong health and protect children from chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes and heart disease when they become adults.

What are healthy first foods?

Breastmilk is your baby's first food, which provides important nutrition and protection from illness. When your child is about six months old and ready to eat solid foods, it is a good idea to begin introducing a variety of healthy foods, one at a time. You should continue to offer breast milk as your child's primary nutrition. If you are not breastfeeding, use infant formula until your baby turns one year old.

Healthy first food examples:

- Cooked whole-grains or infant cereal mixed with breast milk or formula
- Mashed banana or avocado
- Cooked and pureed carrots, peas, sweet potato or squash
- Unsweetened applesauce
- Cooked and pureed beans or chicken

How healthy first foods impact a child's future

We all want to raise healthy, happy children. The foods children eat help set their path for growth and development. Healthy foods build a strong brain and body, which supports your child's success throughout life, whether it is their first day of school or their first day of work.

Starting with good food from the very beginning helps your child to:

- Like food that is good for them now and later
- Be open to trying new foods
- Set eating habits throughout life

It may take many times for your child to like a new food. It is important for them to try new tastes and textures so they learn to like lots of healthy foods.

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