

Feeding Young Children: Ten Months and Beyond

Time has worked her magic and your newborn is now a little person of 10 months. She has a few teeth, can sit alone, probably can crawl or even walk. She's probably still nursing or drinking from a bottle many times during the day and occasionally at night. In the past few months he's tried foods of many tastes and colors and a few different textures. Some of your babies love food and a few of them still could care less. Some will still only eat purees and others refuse anything that they can't feed themselves. You know if you have a sensitive one who gets a rash from everything or you have a baby who loves food and is ready to eat anything. And, of course, there are all the variations in-between. It's all normal. As you can see, they're all growing and developing and maturing at their own perfect rate. And, all your babies are getting more curious about everything. So now is the time to let them explore with food.

For most of you, it's no longer necessary to make special food for your baby. Older babies can eat almost everything as long as it's real food; fruits, vegetables, grains, meats, fish, dairy, herbs and spices. A pot of chili or stew can easily be pureed or cut into small pieces for tiny finger to feed to himself. It's time to invite your baby to try the same foods that you're eating. Here's an invaluable parenting trick. It's very, very important for your children to see you enjoying your food with a smile on your face and some sounds like "ummmm" coming from you. In fact, your enjoyment of anything will always be a guide for your child. They may or may not like it this time but they might the next or the time after that. Get it?

And what about family mealtime? It's nice to eat with your baby when you can but you don't need to eat every meal with them. Sometimes it's just nice to be with your mate. Slowly you can integrate this little one into family mealtimes.

Dr. Lindy's basic rules for feeding young children:

Rule #1 Eat in designated eating areas.

Feed your children only in a designated eating area like a high chair in the kitchen, at the dining room table, on a picnic bench or even on a picnic cloth spread on the grass at the park. This encourages good eating habits.

Rule #2 Children don't need snacks.

They only need to eat when they're hungry, mostly at mealtimes. Avoid feeding children in the car to keep them content or give them a "snack" to keep them busy. DO NOT feed snack foods to babies or any child just because it's all they will eat. Foods that are processed and crunchy will create a longing and craving for this type of food. Once they acquire a taste for these "snack foods," it will be more difficult to feed your babies the foods you really want them to have. Even if these processed foods are organic or made entirely of vegetables, don't do it. You'll be sorry! It's OK if they're bored or unhappy about something. Using food to placate unhappiness can set up some unhealthy associations. Food is to be eaten at the table and in the social atmosphere of mealtime. Your car will be much cleaner, too!

Rule #3 Don't let your child run around with food . It's dangerous and messy and doesn't follow rule

#1.

RULE #4 Don't worry if she doesn't eat.

We all know that food tastes better if you're hungry so let them get hungry. Children eat when they're hungry and sometimes they're just not hungry at a particular meal. It's also OK if they don't like what you've made. Don't make special food for them. Most children eat a variety over time and it all works out over several days. There will be another meal in a few hours and most toddlers are still drinking milk. Don't assume that if your baby rejects a food that she doesn't like it! A child may need to interact with a food 20 or 30 times before she accepts it. Food is very tactile. Just sitting in the high chair and finger painting with avocado is OK. When the food starts hitting the floor it's time to say "all done" and stop giving food. If a child clearly doesn't like a food just keep enjoying it yourself with a smile on your face and an "ummmm" on your lips. The next time serve the same food as if you have no idea that they didn't like it the last time you tried and soon they will accept it.

And just a few more things,

- Wait until your baby is one year old to introduce honey. It is thought to be one of the causes of a very rare disease called infantile botulism.
- Cut food into appropriate sizes for your baby. Some babies prefer to finger feed themselves and can handle larger chunks. Others will gag if it's too chunky so, for them, a puree is still fine. Just keep trying new textures and tastes and eventually they will eat everything.
- Now it's OK to feed citrus and tomatoes. However, some babies will still get rashes around their mouth or anus if they get too much. This not a true allergy, just too much of a good thing. Just back off on the quantity and try again. Fresh rather than processed is best.
- Wait to start nuts and nut butters until age 1 or in some sensitive families, age 2.
- Meat is good for babies and most of yours have already had it as bone broth. Many babies don't like the texture of meat but you can make soups and stews with meat and vegetables and puree them in the blender for the baby. Use sea salt to taste as you would for the entire family and be liberal with the herbs and spices. Let's turn these little humans into foodies!
- Avoid all soy products
- Plain full fat yogurt, cow or goat, is excellent. Serve plain or sweeten lightly with grade B maple syrup or fruit puree.
- Whole, full fat milk, cow or goat, can be given to supplement the breast milk. Raw is best. Second best is organic, cream-at-the-top, non-homogenized, pasteurized but not ultra-pasteurized, milk.