

## When should I stop breastfeeding?

A baby is ready for other feedings when:

- it is about six months old, or older.
- it starts to grab food from the family or from the table.
- it does not push food out with its tongue.

Between 6 months and 1 year, give breast milk whenever the baby wants it. Do not give other foods before 4 months. Even if it is eating other foods, it still needs as much breast milk as before. Follow breastfeeding with other foods, 2 or 3 times a day at first. Begin with a soft, mild food, like cereal or porridge. Some women mix these with breast milk. You do not need expensive baby cereals.

If a baby does not seem happy or well-fed with breastfeeding, and it is between 4 and 6 months old, it may simply need to suckle more so that the mother's breasts will make more milk. The mother should breastfeed the baby as often as the baby wants for about 5 days. If the baby is still unhappy, then she should try other foods: Mash all foods very fine at first until the baby can chew by itself. Use a cup or bowl and spoon to feed the baby.

Babies need to eat often - about 5 times a day. Each day, they should have some main food (porridge, maize, wheat, rice, millet, potato, cassava), mixed with a body building food (beans, finely ground nuts, eggs, cheese, meat or fish), brightly colored vegetables and fruits, and an energy-rich food (finely ground nuts, spoonful of oil, margarine or cooking fat). You do not have to cook 5 times a day. Some meals can be given as a cold snack.

Add new foods one at a time. By about 9 months to 1 year, a baby can eat most family foods if they are cut up and made easy to eat.

Even in the second year, breast milk continues to protect your child against infection and other health problems. If you can, keep breastfeeding until the child is at least 2 years old, even if you have another baby. Most babies will slowly stop breastfeeding on their own.