

INFANT INFO

Getting Started: Record keeping requirements, Enrollment procedures

On the Food Program, a separate menu is needed for each infant. On the infant meal pattern, the first year in life is divided into three age groups, each consisting of 4 months. On infants 1st Birthday, he or she will move to the child meal pattern.

Although the infant meal pattern specifies breakfast, lunch, supper, and snacks, this may be inconsistent with baby's feeding pattern. Infants should be fed when hungry, and not restricted to a rigid schedule. However, the meals and snacks you *claim* must have been served within the regulatory meal times.

Infants are reimbursed at the same rate as children.

Forms are needed to enroll an infant on the Food Program: Enrollment Form and a Formula Policy Statement, which states whether infant receives breast milk or formula, and who provides formula.

You must offer to supply an iron-fortified infant formula, and offer a minimum of one brand of infant formula to parents of enrolled infants. If a parent declines the offered formula and chooses to supply another iron-fortified formula, only the meals in which you provide another meal component are reimbursable.

If a parent declines the offered formula and chooses to supply breast milk, the meals may be claimed for reimbursement. This includes infants less than 4 months of age when there are no other meal components required.

Storage of Formula and Breast Milk

Refrigerate prepared bottles of formula for up to 24 hours.

Open cans of prepared formula should be covered, refrigerated and used within 48 hours.

Expressed breast milk may be stored in the refrigerator or freezer in either sterilized bottles or disposable plastic nursing bags.

Expressed breast milk will keep in the refrigerator for up to 48 hours, or in the freezer for up to 2 weeks. Thaw frozen breast milk under cool running water.

Once thawed, do not refreeze. Don't forget to shake the bottled breast milk before you serve it to re-mix.

Reheat breast milk just until room temperature in warm water.

Food Program Bottle Requirements

Infants should never be allowed to roam with their bottles. Infants should be held or fed sitting up during bottle-feeding. Do not prop bottles or ever put an infant to bed with a bottle.

If more than one infant is in care, bottles should be clearly labeled to avoid sharing germs.

Bottles may be warmed by setting them in a bowl of warm water, or by holding under warm water. Avoid the microwave, the formula/breast milk can heat unevenly and may scald the infant.

Transition to Cows Milk

Iron Fortified formula or Breast milk must be served until the 1st Birthday. Milk is not creditable until the 1st Birthday. At that time, you can begin to gradually mix formula and milk. At first you can mix the formula with about 25% milk.

Gradually increase the proportion of whole milk until you have made the switch. It is recommended that whole milk be served until 2 years of age, as the fat is needed for energy and brain growth.

Infant Cereal

Iron fortified, single ingredient infant cereal must be offered to all infants at breakfast, ages 8 through 11 months. The infant cereals that come pre-mixed or that contain bananas are not creditable, we encourage you to mash and add your own. Iron fortified infant cereal is a good choice for baby's first solid food because it:

Is easily digested

Is least likely to cause an allergic reaction

Contains important nutrients

Can be altered in texture to meet the developmental needs of the baby

Iron Fortified Infant Cereal may also be served at lunch and supper as a meat alternate. Iron fortified cereal may be prepared with breast milk or formula.

Cheerios and other big-kid cereals are not creditable until 1st Birthday. Cheerios make great finger foods, but they are an extra; iron fortified infant cereal must still be served.

Cereal must be identified on your infant menus as Iron Fortified, you may record as IFIC, which stands for Iron Fortified Infant Cereal.

Solid Foods

The decision to introduce solid foods should be made in consultation with the parents.

Introduce foods that have already been introduced by the parents, with no problems.

Continue to communicate with the parents about when foods are introduced at home so that you can both serve the same foods.

Wait at least 7 days between each new food.

During the first 4-6 months, an infant requires only breast-milk or iron fortified formula. Infants swallowing and digestive systems are not developmentally ready to handle solid foods until they are between 4-6 months of age.

Infants are mature enough to begin learning to eat from a spoon when they can:

- Hold their necks steady and sit with support
- Draw in their lower lips as a spoon is removed from their mouth
- Keep foods in their mouths and swallow it rather than push it back out on their chins.

Babies show disinterest or fullness by:

- Leaning back
- Turning away
- Sealing their lips together
- Playing with the food
- Pushing away the bottle or spoon

Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and Vegetables may be introduced when the baby is readily accepted infant cereal at each meal.

Fruits and Vegetables must be 100% fruit or vegetable.

Do not give raw fruits, except bananas, to infants because they may cause choking and are difficult for them to digest.

Do not serve citrus fruits to infants before 1 year of age, because these foods may cause allergic reactions.

Juice

At 8 months, infants may be offered 100% fruit juice in a cup, not a bottle, at snacks.

Commercial/Jar Baby Food

To be creditable on the Food Program, commercial jarred baby foods must be 100% meat, 100% fruit, or 100% vegetable. The combination dinners such as chicken and veggies, beef and noodles, etc. are not creditable; they are not 100% meat. Desserts also are not reimbursable; they only contain some fruit, not 100% fruit. Read those labels!

Be sure to serve food to the baby from a dish, NOT from the jar. Throw away any uneaten food from the dish.

Opened or freshly made fruits or vegetables baby food can be stored in the refrigerator for no longer than 2 days. Meats should be stored no longer than 1 day.

Preparing Baby Food at Home

Homemade baby food is more economical and you are able to ensure the quality of the food. It can be as simple as mashing up what the big kids are eating. You can also steam vegetables, meats, and fruits in the microwave, blend in a blender till smooth, and pour into an ice cube tray. Once the cubes have frozen, pop out and store in a Ziploc bag in the freezer. At mealtime, simply defrost cubes.

Preparation Guidelines:

Make sure hands, utensils; work space and food are all very clean

Remove skins, pits and seeds from fruits and veggies. Cut away any fat, gristle, skin and bones from meat, poultry and fish.

Modify the texture by mashing food with a fork, grinding with a food grinder, or pureeing in a blender.

Choking Hazards

Hot dogs, popcorn, grapes, dried fruit, whole pieces of canned fruit, peanut butter, nuts, raw carrots, and raisins are all potential choking hazards and should not be served to infants.

Allergy Alerts

Always work with parents and introduce new foods slowly to minimize potential allergic reactions. Some foods, which commonly cause allergic reactions in infants, include wheat, cow's milk, nuts, seeds, peanut butter, chocolate, citrus fruits, egg whites, and shellfish. Honey should not be served to infants because it contains botulism spores, which can cause severe food poisoning. After digestive systems mature, honey can be tolerated.

Creditable Infant Foods:

Milk based iron fortified infant formula

Breast milk

Soy based iron fortified infant formula

Follow-up iron Fortified infant formula (6 months and up)

Iron fortified, single ingredient infant cereals

Commercial strained, junior, or instant baby foods that are **100% fruit, vegetable, or meat**

Homemade infant foods that are 100% fruit, vegetable, or meat/meat alternate

Homemade combination dishes that contain the required minimum serving of meat/meat alternate, vegetables

100% fruit juices (8 months and up)

Breads for infant snacks include: Bread, teething biscuits, bagels, English muffins, rolls, soft tortillas, biscuits, arrowroot cookies, crackers, (not graham) zwieback

Non –Creditable Infant Foods:

Infant formulas without iron

Milk

Non-infant cereals

Commercial baby foods that are not 100%fruit, vegetable, or meat, such

Vegetable and meat combination dinners

Prepared jarred infant cereals

Infant cereal with fruit

Infant desserts, cobblers, puddings, tutti-frutti etc

Nuts, seeds

Peanut butter

Yogurt

Honey

Graham crackers, cookies

Hot dogs

As a provider, if you are feeding infants enrolled in the food program, please be aware of the infant meal pattern, the importance of iron in an infant's diet, the necessary communication with parents when introducing new foods, and the possible hazards and allergies produced by some foods. Providers should always discuss feeding and eating habits with parents of infants.

If you or the parents of infants you have in care have any questions, or would like additional information, please call the office. We will be happy to help.