**FIGURE 7.1 WHAT YOUR BABY CAN DO AND HOW AND WHAT TO FEED HIM**

In making feeding decisions for your baby, go by what he can do, not by how old he is. The ages in this figure are given in ranges, and even then they are ball-park estimates. Your baby is the only one who can really say when he’s ready!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Feeding capabilities</th>
<th>Manner of feeding</th>
<th>Suggested foods</th>
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</table>
| **Birth to 6 months** | Cuddles  
Roots for nipple  
Sucks  
Swallows liquids  | Cuddling and nipple-feeding from breast or bottle  | Breastmilk and/or iron-fortified infant formula  |
| **5 to 7 months**   | Sits supported or alone  
Keeps head straight when sitting  
Follows food with eyes  
Opens for spoon  
Closes lips over spoon  
Moves semisolid food to back of tongue  
Swallows semisolids  | Spoon-feeding of smooth semisolid food  
Cuddling and nipple-feeding from breast or bottle  | Iron-fortified rice or barley cereal mixed with breastmilk or iron-fortified formula  
Breastmilk and/or iron-fortified formula  |
| **6 to 8 months**   | Sits alone  
Keeps food in mouth to munch  
Pushes food to jaws with tongue  
Munches, mashes food with up-and-down movement  
Palms food (palmar grasp)  
Scrapes food from hand into mouth  
Drinks from a cup but loses a lot  | Spoon-feeding of thicker and lumpier food  
Finger-feeding of thicker, lumpier food: “If it hangs together, it’s a finger food.”  
Cup drinking  
Cuddling and nipple-feeding from breast or bottle  | Well-cooked, mashed, or milled vegetables and fruits  
Mashed potatoes  
Sticky rice  
Wheat-free dry cereal like Cheerios or Corn Chex  
Breastmilk and/or iron-fortified formula  |
| **7 to 10 months**  | Sits alone easily  
Bites off food  
Chews with rotary motion  
Moves food side-to-side in mouth, pausing with food on the center of the tongue  
Begins curving lip around cup  
Palmar changing to pincer grasp (thumb and forefinger)  | Finger-feeding of lumpy food and pieces of soft food  
Cup drinking  
Cuddling and nipple-feeding from breast or bottle  | Chopped cooked vegetables  
Chopped canned or cooked fruits  
Cheese  
Mashed cooked dried beans  
Strips of bread, toast, tortilla  
Crackers and dry cereals containing wheat  
Breastmilk and/or iron-fortified formula  |
| **9 to 12 months**  | Getting better at picking up small pieces of food (pincer grasp)  
Curves lip around cup  
Getting better at controlling food in mouth  
Getting better at chewing  | Finger-feeding of soft table foods  
Drinking by himself from a covered toddler cup  
Cuddling and nipple-feeding, away from mealtime  | Cut-up soft cooked foods  
Cut-up soft raw food (like bananas or peaches)  
Tender chopped meats  
Casseroles with noodles cut up  
Dry cereal  
Toast and crackers  
Eggs and cheese  
Breastmilk and/or iron-fortified formula  |
| **12 months and beyond** | Becomes more skillful with hands  
Finger-feeds  
Improves chewing  
Improves cup-drinking  
Is interested in food  
Becomes a part of the family with respect to eating  | Finger-feeding soft table foods  
Cup-drinking by himself  
Nipple-feeding only at snack time, not at mealtime  
Begins to use spoon  | Everything from the family table that is soft  
Avoid smooth pieces that can choke: whole grapes, hot dog rounds  
Cut up meat finely  
All right to change to whole pasteurized milk  |


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