

## Q. Does my baby need vitamin or mineral supplements at home?

**A.** Preterm babies on formula require Vitamin D for bone growth until they are getting enough in their formula alone (about 750 mL to 1000 mL or 25 to 33 ounces per day). D-Vi-Sol, Poly-Vi-Sol, Tri-Vi-Sol or Baby D Drops are fine. If your baby is formula fed, an iron supplement may not be needed if you are giving your baby the type that says “iron fortified”. Some preterm babies (those with birth weights below 2 pounds ) will be given added iron drops (Fer-In-Sol) in addition to the iron in the formula. All breastfed premature babies need iron drops and Vitamin D to meet their needs, as both are low in breastmilk. Your baby’s needs may vary, so be sure to check with your Doctor or Dietitian.

## Q. Who can I call about my baby’s growth and feeding after I leave?

**A.** Your baby’s Doctor, who may be a Pediatrician (specialist in treating babies and children), will be following your baby’s growth very closely in the beginning and can answer your feeding questions. If your baby was born at or below 1250 g (2 pounds 12 ounces), they will be scheduled to come back to see the team in the Developmental Follow-up Clinic, which includes a Dietitian. The Dietitian in the NICU can provide more information about your baby’s nutrition follow-up.

## If you have further questions about your baby’s diet, contact:

- Cindy Ulrich**, Registered Dietitian  
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit  
Children’s Care Program  
London Health Sciences Centre  
519-685-8500, extension 65610  
or pager 14903
- Megan Marcy**, Registered Dietitian  
Developmental Follow-up Clinic  
Children’s Care Program  
London Health Sciences Centre  
519-685-8500, extension 53082









## Q. Does my baby need extra water? What about fruit juice?

**A.** Babies usually don’t need extra water, except during very hot weather, or if fever or diarrhea is present. Babies get enough Vitamin C from breastmilk or formula and later on from fruits and vegetables. Fruit juice is not important to give your baby. Once baby is interested in taking a cup, a maximum of 4 ounces per day of fruit juice may be given, so that enough formula or breastmilk is also taken. Avoid fruit “drinks” and crystals.



## Q. When should I give my baby other foods?

**A.** When your baby is about 6 months corrected age, you can start adding other foods into the diet. The first foods given should be those high in dietary iron such as iron fortified infant cereal, strained meat, fish and poultry and well-cooked legumes. Foods are fed from a spoon starting with “small tastes” one or two times daily to see how your baby accepts them. Foods should not be fed from a bottle so your baby learns how to eat them. Each new food can be started every 3 to 5 days when baby is in good spirits, starting with a teaspoon and slowly working up to a few tablespoons. Always offer your baby breast milk or formula feedings before solids until 9 to 12 months corrected age to ensure good nutrition and growth. Introduce a cup when your baby can hold things. Wait until your baby is one year of age corrected to switch from breastmilk or formula to cow’s milk to reduce the risk of iron deficiency anemia. When you start cow’s milk it should be whole milk (3.25%), not 2% or skim. Do not use reduced fat milks until after age 2.

Age (corrected)	New food introduced	Why?
0-6 months	Breast milk or infant formula	Provides good nutrition  Your baby is not yet ready for solid foods
6-9 months	 Infant cereals enriched with iron   Strained meats, fish and poultry   Well cooked legumes (e.g. Chick peas, kidney beans)   Cooked egg, 1-3 times/week Yogurt (no honey added)   Strained vegetables Strained fruits   Toast Creamed cottage cheese	Provides a dietary source of iron  Provides additional protein, B vitamins and iron  Provides added Iron, protein and B vitamins  Provides additional vitamins and minerals  Introduces new food flavours and textures  For better acceptance, offer vegetables before fruit  Encourages chewing
9-12 months	 Finely diced or mashed table foods (remove baby portion before seasonings are added) Finger foods	Introduces new textures. Encourages chewing, co-ordination and independence Babies born early or who have ongoing medical problems may have more difficulty with lumpier textures. In this case pureed foods should be made thicker and lumpier gradually
12 months	 Whole cow’s milk (3.25%)	Earlier weaning of iron fortified formula may increase the risk of iron deficiency anemia. Continue supplemental iron if breastfeeding until 12mos corrected age to reduce the risk of iron deficiency anemia.

# Feeding Your Premature Baby



