



## ***Starting Table & Finger Foods***

By 9 to 12 months, your baby will be ready to join your family at the table for meals.

**During this time, many babies will:**

- **Eat with their fingers.**
  - **Want to eat the same food the family eats.**
  - **Use a regular cup with help at meals and snacks.**
  - **Enjoy learning about food.**
  - **Be messy eaters.**
- Wash your baby's hands before eating now that he is crawling and touching many things.
  - Your baby needs foods with more texture to help him learn how to chew. Babies with only a few teeth can chew soft foods.
  - Cut the food you give your baby into small pieces, especially round foods like grapes and hot dogs, to prevent choking.
  - If your baby refuses a food, offer it another time. It may take a while for him to get used to new tastes and textures.
  - As you offer the cup more, start putting less in the bottle. This will help to have your baby off the bottle around age 1.
  - For your baby's safety, don't give him bottles or sippy cups to carry around.

Family meal time is important. This is a good time to start sitting down to eat meals with your baby; he will learn everything about eating from you.

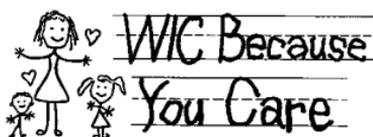
Most babies are now ready for three meals plus two to three snacks and breast milk or formula. Gradually decrease the number of feedings from the breast or bottle as your baby eats more solid foods and is drinking more from a cup.

Start with a tablespoon or two of each food. Let your baby's hunger be your guide. A good meal pattern for your baby is:

<b>Breakfast</b>	cereal, fruit
<b>Morning snack</b>	crackers and cheese
<b>Lunch</b>	meat, vegetable, fruit and bread
<b>Afternoon snack</b>	crackers, yogurt, fruit or cereal
<b>Dinner</b>	meat, vegetable and noodles
<b>Bedtime snack</b>	toast, cereal or yogurt
<b>Breast milk or formula</b>	three to four feedings, plus offer in a cup at meals and snacks

Offer finger foods for meals and snacks, such as:

- Toast.
- Noodles.
- Cooked or canned vegetables.
- Crackers (soda or animal).
- Soft, cooked beans.
- Cereal, like Cheerios®.
- Cheese (shredded or cubed).
- Canned fruit or soft, fresh fruit.



**North Dakota WIC Nutrition Program**  
North Dakota Department of Health  
600 E. Boulevard Ave.  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0200  
800.472.2286

