

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF AMERICAN BABY

# baby & you

by WAL★MART

**FEEDING 411**  
answers to your  
pressing questions

**35** things to  
do before  
baby's big debut

## Looking Good!

Tracking baby's visual development

## sob story

WHY NEWBORNS CRY—AND  
WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

The lowdown on your  
**POST-BABY BODY**

COMPLIMENTS  
OF WAL-MART



by Maryann LoRusso

Making sense of those .....  
age-old tales about  
nourishing your baby

# 10 feeding busted

The morning my husband and I brought our daughter, Ava, home from the hospital, we placed her gently in the crib and looked at each other with puzzled faces that said, “Now what?” This hungry little baby had some set of pipes, and her protests were making it clear we weren’t living up to her expectations—especially when it came to feeding her.

Enter the “feeding consultants”—the older females in my family who had opinions on all things baby-related. My mother, witnessing my struggles with breastfeeding, tried to persuade me to switch to formula. An aunt said that giving Ava a bottle of milk thickened with rice cereal was our ticket to a better night’s sleep. My head was spinning from all the advice—and I was more confused than ever!

“Feeding lore is so powerful,” says Ellyn Satter, PhD, a registered dietitian and the author of *Child of Mine: Feeding With Love and Good Sense* (Bull Publishing, 2000). “It gets passed on from one parent to another, and it’s hard for new mothers to question the advice of those they respect.”

To help you separate fact from fiction, we’ve investigated 10 popular myths about feeding infants and toddlers. Here’s what you should know.



A close-up photograph of a baby with light hair being fed with a clear plastic bottle. The baby is wearing a dark blue shirt and is looking towards the camera. An adult's hands are visible, holding the bottle and supporting the baby. The adult is wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt and a ring on their finger. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the adult's clothing and a hint of a red object.

myths



## myth#1

Adding cereal to your baby's bottle will help her sleep through the night.

**TRUTH** Thickening formula or expressed breast milk with rice cereal won't help your baby snooze better. "Studies show that introducing babies to solid food does not change their sleeping patterns," says Satter. Plus, the added calories may cause extra weight gain, putting your child at risk for obesity. According to William Cochran, MD, chairman of gastroenterology and nutrition for the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and vice chairman of pediatrics at the Geisinger Clinic in Danville, Pennsylvania, the only time your doctor may recommend adding a small amount of rice cereal to your baby's bottle is if she suffers from reflux, a condition that causes the stomach contents to back up into the throat.

2.5  
ounces

of formula/breast milk  
your baby should consume  
daily for every pound of  
body weight

## myth#2

There's nothing you can do to prevent food allergies.

**TRUTH** Delaying the introduction of solids can help ward off allergies. "The sooner you add new foods into your baby's diet, the higher the probability of an allergy developing," explains Dr. Cochran. That's because infants have more absorbent intestines than older children, and whole proteins—the stuff that causes allergies—get soaked up more readily. The AAP recommends postponing solids until your baby is 4 months—6 months if you're breast-feeding. And wait until he's at least 2 before offering foods that can trigger allergies, such as soy, shellfish, and peanuts, especially if food allergies run in the family.

## myth#3

Small-breasted women have trouble producing enough milk.

**TRUTH** Women of all sizes can nurse successfully. "The size of a woman's breasts is determined by the amount of fatty tissue, not the amount of milk-producing tissue," Satter says. "These ducts may be distributed outside the breast area, like under the arms, so a woman can have a lot of milk-producing capacity and still be pretty flat-chested."





## myth#4

Breastfeeding comes easily and naturally to everyone.


**TRUTH** From painful engorgement to getting your baby to latch on correctly, the first few weeks of nursing can be challenging business. For San Francisco mom Corey Flynn, nursing seemed anything but natural. "My nipples hurt so bad that I would put my feet under the chair in front of me to brace myself for the pain when my son latched on," she recalls. Satter's advice is to hang in there, speak with experts (like a lactation consultant), and remember that breastfeeding will get easier. "With practice, you'll get more confident," Satter says, "and the pain will eventually subside."

## Q+A How can I tell if my breastfed newborn is getting enough to eat?

Check her diapers for clues. During the first month, your newborn should wet six or more diapers per day and have three or four bowel movements, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. When you're nursing, listen for swallowing noises, usually after several sucks in a row. If your baby appears satisfied several hours after a feeding, that's another sign she's eating well. Most important, make sure your infant is gaining enough weight. During her first few days she'll lose up to 10 percent of her birthweight, but by the end of her second week she should regain it. For the next three months she should put on between a half-ounce and an ounce a day. If your baby isn't growing as fast as expected, consult your pediatrician. He may conduct a stool test to see whether baby is absorbing everything he eats.



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## myth#5

Once a baby is on solids, he can drink cow's milk.

**TRUTH** A baby's digestive system cannot handle regular milk until he reaches his first birthday. Besides falling short of his vitamin C and iron requirements, explains Dr. Cochran, cow's milk contains high concentrations of protein and minerals, which can stress a baby's immature kidneys and irritate the lining of his stomach and intestines. Once your baby is 1 and eating a balanced diet, you can offer whole cow's milk, but limit his daily intake to 16 to 24 ounces. Also, hold off on giving him reduced-fat milk until his second birthday; he needs the higher fat content of whole milk to maintain normal weight gain.

## myth#7

You can start giving your baby solids as soon as he shows an interest.

**TRUTH** It's best to wait until your pediatrician gives you the go-ahead, usually somewhere between 4 and 6 months. Until then, breast milk or formula will provide all the nutrients your child needs. A very young baby's digestive system is not sufficiently developed before this time. Also, an

infant must be ready to learn to push food to the back of his mouth with his tongue and swallow it, which happens around 6 months. "If a baby is too young to use a spoon, he's too young for solids," says Satter. As your child approaches 6 months, look for signs that he is ready, such as trying to grab food from your plate. Plain rice cereal mixed with expressed breast milk or formula is a good first food.

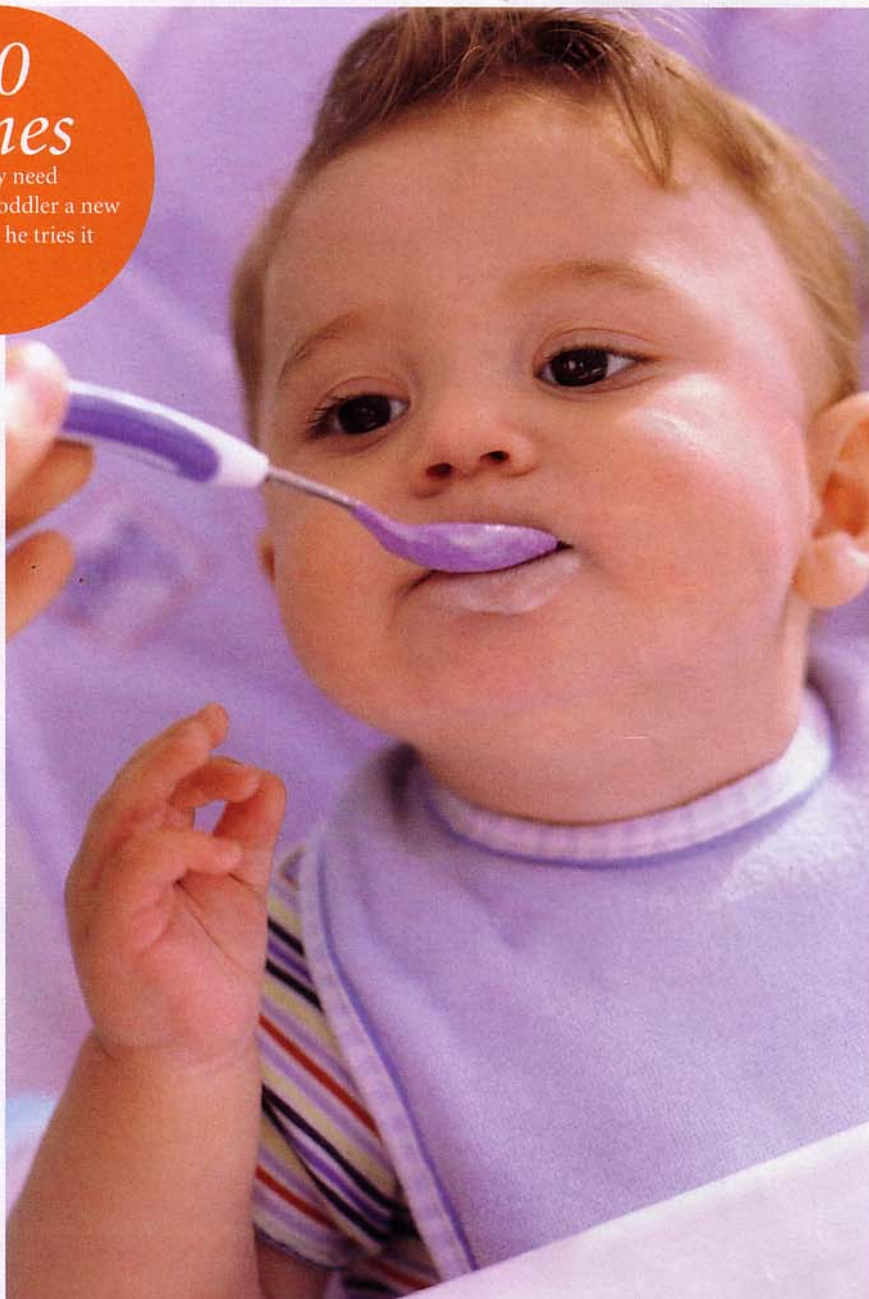
10  
times

you may need  
to offer your toddler a new  
food before he tries it

## myth#6

Soy formula is best.

**TRUTH** You should give your baby soy formula only if it's medically necessary. Your pediatrician may prescribe it if your newborn is unable to digest lactose or has a milk allergy. But according to Satter, soy is not necessarily better for healthy babies than regular formula. "Some people have the idea that because soy is a vegetable, it's going to be more nutritious than cow's milk," she says. But soy formulas have less protein than cow's milk, and your baby may absorb calcium and other minerals less effectively. If you think your baby has an issue with her current formula, talk to your pediatrician.





# FEEDING BOOKSHELF

- *Feeding Your Child for Lifelong Health: Birth Through Age 6*, by Susan B. Roberts and Melvin B. Hayman (Bantam, 1999)
- *Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense*, by Ellyn Satter (Bull Publishing, 2000)
- *American Academy of Pediatrics Guide to Your Child's Nutrition: Making Peace at the Table and Building Healthy Eating Habits for Life*, by William H. Dietz and Loraine M. Stern (Random House, 1999)
- *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding—Seventh Revised Edition*, by La Leche League International (Penguin Group, 2004)

25  
percent

chance a parent with  
a food allergy will pass it  
on to her child

## myth#8

Giving your toddler fruit  
juice is the same as giving  
her fruit.

**TRUTH** Juice is not a substitute for fresh fruit; it's high in calories, low in nutrients, and lacks beneficial fiber. "We give kids way too much juice," says Dr. Cochran, noting that it can cause dental problems, decrease your baby's appetite for milk, and develop her taste for sweets. Fresh fruit is a much healthier alternative. The AAP recommends that kids older than 1 consume less than 6 ounces of juice a day; it's best to offer diluted, 100-percent-fruit varieties containing pulp.

## myth#9

It's best to wean by going  
cold turkey around the time  
baby turns 1.

**TRUTH** A more gradual approach is the way to go. It's hard on your baby to have something so comforting, be it breast or bottle, taken away so abruptly. Satter says the best way to wean is to gradually introduce solid foods that replace a portion of the day's breast milk or formula. Many babies begin weaning themselves—expressing a desire to eat more table food and spend less time at the bottle or breast—at around 8 months. At that time, you can begin to offer formula or breast milk in a cup, and drop one feeding. After several days, you may drop a second feeding, and so forth. Nighttime feedings are usually the last to go.

## myth#10

All toddlers need a daily  
vitamin supplement.

**TRUTH** Toddlers who eat a well-balanced diet probably don't need a multivitamin. Satter says many parents come to her concerned that their children aren't getting enough nutrients; she points out that toddlers are notorious grazers who tend to eat well over the course of a week. Satter's advice: Offer your child a variety of foods every day, from all the food groups. If you're still worried she's not meeting her daily requirements, talk to your pediatrician about whether a children's multivitamin will help.

Maryann LoRusso is a San Francisco-based freelance writer and a mother of two who has written on a variety of parenting and women's health topics.

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