



February 2024 Issue

WIC Program Newsletter

Office Hours

Tuesday - Thursday:

9:00 am – 3:45 pm

Monday:

7:30 am – 3:45 pm

Friday: 7:30am-3:15pm

Site Location & Dates

Currently Conducting
Remote and In Person
Appointments

New Service Location: 85

Aiken Ave Rensselaer, Ny
Every 2nd Tuesday of the
month from 10 am-2 pm

Breastfeeding Support Group

Please join us for our
virtual breastfeeding
support group!

Every Monday,

**Wednesday and Friday at
10 am and Wednesday at
6 pm.**

CEO's WIC Program

2328 Fifth Avenue,
Troy, NY 12180

Phone: 518-272-6159

Fax: 518-205-7624

Website:

www.ceoempowers.org/wic

*** This institution is an equal
opportunity provider.**



Photo courtesy of:
<https://www.jarofflemons.com/baby-led-weaning-recipe-ideas/>

Finger Foods for Babies

When babies begin feeding themselves – a new task most really enjoy – they'll find that they like trying new tastes and textures. By the time they're 9 months old, most babies have developed their fine motor skills – the small, precise movements – needed to pick up small pieces of food and feed themselves. You may notice that your baby can take hold of food (and other small objects) between their forefinger and thumb in a pincer grasp. The pincer grasp starts out a little clumsy, but with practice soon becomes a real skill.

Let your child self-feed as much as possible. You'll still help by spoon-feeding cereal and other important dietary elements. But encouraging finger feeding helps your child develop independent, healthy eating habits.

Finger feeding – and using utensils a little later – gives babies some control over what they eat and how much. Sometimes they'll eat the food, sometimes not, and that's all part of the process of learning self-regulation. Even little kids can tell when they're hungry or full, so let them learn to recognize and respond to these cues.

What Should a Baby Eat?

Now that they're joining the rest of the family for meals, older babies are ready to try more table foods.

This means more work for whoever makes the meals for the family, but dishes often can be adapted for the baby. For instance, your little one can have some of the zucchini you're making for dinner. Cook that serving a bit longer – until it's soft – and cut it into pieces small enough for the baby to handle. Pieces of ripe banana, well-cooked pasta, and small pieces of chicken are other good choices.

Before giving your child a finger food, try a bite first and ask yourself:

- Does it melt in the mouth? Some dry cereals and crackers that are light and flaky will melt in the mouth.
- Is it cooked enough so that it mashes easily? Well-cooked veggies and fruits will mash easily,

Sources: Finger Foods for Babies. <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/finger-foods.html>, 25 Jan 2024.

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Photo courtesy of: <https://newdarlings.com/2020/08/baby-led-weaning-meal-ideas-for-the-1st-year/>

as will canned fruit and vegetables (choose ones without added sugar or salt).

- Is it soft? Cottage cheese, shredded cheese, and small pieces of tofu are good examples.
- Can it be gummed? Pieces of ripe banana and well-cooked pasta can be gummed.
- Is it small enough? Food should be cut into small pieces. The sizes will vary depending on the food's texture. A piece of chicken, for instance, needs to be smaller than a piece of watermelon, which even a pair of baby gums will quickly smash.

If your child doesn't like a food, don't let that stop you from offering it at future meals. Kids are naturally slow to accept new tastes and textures. For example, some are more sensitive to texture and may reject coarse foods, such as meat. When introducing meat, it's helpful to start with well-cooked ground meats or shreds of thinly sliced deli meats, such as turkey. Present your baby with a variety of foods, even some that he or she didn't seem to like the week before. Don't force your baby to eat but realize that it can take 10 or more tries before a child will accept a new food.

Finger Foods to Avoid

Finger feeding is fun and rewarding for older babies. But avoid foods that can cause choking and those with little nutritional value.

Choking Hazards

Parents and caregivers can help prevent choking by supervising the baby during eating. Foods that are choking hazards include:

- pieces of raw vegetables or hard fruits
- whole grapes, berries, cherry or grape tomatoes (instead, peel and slice or cut in quarters)
- raisins and other dried fruit
- peanuts, nuts, and seeds
- large scoops of peanut butter and other nut or seed butters (use only a thin layer)
- whole hot dogs and kiddie sausages (peel and cut these in very small pieces)
- untoasted bread, especially white bread that sticks together.
- chunks of cheese or meat
- candy (hard candy, jellybeans, gummies, chewing gum)
- popcorn, pretzels, corn chips, and other snack foods
- marshmallows

Hold the Sweets

At first bite, your baby probably will love the taste of cookies, cake, and other sweets, but don't give them now. Your little one needs nutrient-rich foods, not the empty calories found in desserts and high-fat snacks, like potato chips.