

# Introducing Cow's Milk to Baby



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When your baby is between 9 and 12 months old, offer homogenized (3.25%) cow's milk. Cow's milk before 6 months of age can cause bleeding in the gut and increases risk for iron deficiency anemia. Cow's milk should not take the place of breast milk or formula under the age of 9-12 months. Continue offering full fat (3.25%) cow's milk until your child is 2 years of age. After 2 years of age, you can transition to your family's choice of milk. You can give your baby up to 2 cups (500 mL) of 3.25% milk each day. The vitamin D and calcium in cow's milk helps your baby's bones and teeth grow strong.

### Avoid Offering Milk Alternative Beverages

Do not offer babies who are younger than 2 years old plant-based milks such as oat, rice, almond, or soy milk.

If your baby is diagnosed with a cow's milk allergy, speak to your doctor regarding your baby's allergy and milk alternatives that can be provided.

### Iron-Deficiency Anemia

Iron-deficiency anemia occurs when a baby does not have enough iron in their blood. Iron is important for growth and development. Babies are born with iron stores from their mother, but they are used up by 6 months of age.

If your baby is experiencing iron-deficiency anemia they may have a poor appetite, be irritable, have pale skin, or grow slowly.

To prevent iron-deficiency anemia, offer your baby iron-rich foods when they turn 6 months old. It is not recommended to introduce cow's milk to a baby younger than 9 months of age. Offering more than 2 cups of homogenized (3.25%) cow's milk per day to your baby increases their risk of developing iron-deficiency anemia.

#### Iron-rich foods include:

- Meat
- Poultry
- Fish
- Lentils
- Eggs
- Tofu
- Iron-fortified infant cereal

If you are concerned about your baby's iron levels or you notice any of the signs discussed above, visit your doctor.

