

Nutritional needs of infants from birth to six months.

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Introduction

The word "infant nutrition" refers to an infant's dietary needs. A diet lacking in essential calories, minerals, vitamins, or water is considered inadequate. Breast milk provides the best nutrition for these key early months of growth when compared to infant formula. Breastfeeding, for example, can aid with anaemia, obesity, and SIDS prevention, as well as gut health, immunity, IQ, and dental development. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends solely feeding an infant breast milk or iron-fortified formula for the first six months of life, then continuing for one year or longer as desired by the infant and mother. Between the ages of four and six months, solid foods are typically offered to new-born's. In the past, the only way to nourish newborns was to breastfeed them [1,2].

Infant nutrition requirements

Infant nutrition necessitates the provision of essential nutrients that aid in normal growth, development, and infection and sickness resistance. By determining whether to nurse or bottle-feed the infant before birth and preparing for her decision, the pregnant woman can achieve optimal nutrition [3].

Birth to six months

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) recommend that infants only be fed breast milk for the first six months of their lives. If the baby is being fed infant formula, it must be iron-fortified. When a baby is breastfed exclusively for the first six months, supplemental vitamins and minerals are rarely needed. Vitamins D and B12, on the other hand, may be necessary if the breastfeeding mother is deficient in these nutrients. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all babies, whether breastfed or not, take a vitamin D supplement within the first few days of life to prevent vitamin D insufficiency or rickets. Infants who have been solely breastfed for four months will require an iron supplement.

This sort of nutrition may be substituted for breast milk due to lifestyle choices or the fact that some women are unable to nurse. A infant gets all of the nutrition he or she needs to thrive and grow by drinking formula. Every child is different, and different nutrients may be required to help them develop and flourish. Breast milk may also be inaccessible to babies who are allergic to it, premature, or otherwise unable to ingest it. There are various formulas for each type of infant. If a child has a lactose intolerance, lactose-free or soy-based formulas can be utilised. Some babies have severe colic and need a formula that is extremely gentle while still giving all of the

nutrients they need to thrive and grow [4].

It's critical to recognise that some foods are off-limits for babies. Newborns, for example, do not require additional fluids throughout the first four months of life, whether breast-fed or bottle-fed. Excessive intake of extra fluids or supplements can be hazardous. Avoid drinking anything other than human breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula. These substitutes, such as milk, juice, and water, are devoid of the nutrients required for a newborn's growth and development, are difficult to digest, and carry a significant risk of contamination. To make baby formula, you can only use water. Due to the high risk of botulism, honey should also be avoided. Breast milk is the safest option unless the mother is told differently by a health care expert [5].

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