



Welcome Words for your Eight Month Old

First Finger Foods

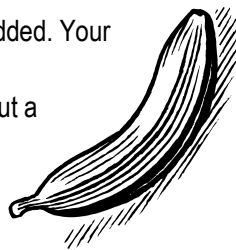
When choosing finger foods for your baby, always keep safety in mind. Eating is best limited to his high chair, where he's safely strapped in place and can be closely watched. Eating when he's crawling or cruising around, or when he's laughing, crying or very excited, can lead to choking. First finger foods should be those your baby can gum until they're safe to swallow or those that will dissolve in the mouth without chewing. Food needs to be cut into small pieces. Because babies tend to put several pieces of food in their mouths at once, don't offer more than a few pieces. As he eats what you've given him, you can give him more. For families with strong histories of food allergies, talk with your baby's health care provider for guidance in introducing new solids to your baby. For babies without a concern of food allergies, here are some good choices.

- small pieces of mashed vegetables cooked until soft such as carrots, squash, potatoes, peas and string beans.
- small pieces of soft, ripe fruits such as bananas, peaches, pears, apricots, melon and grated apple. Peel the skin and remove all seeds.
- soft cheese, cut into small cubes or shredded, and cottage cheese.
- unsalted crackers, graham crackers, soft cookies (such as arrowroot), whole wheat bagel, bread, toast, French toast or pancakes.
- unsweetened cereal such as Cheerios.
- soft-cooked noodles or macaroni cut into small pieces.

Never give a baby spoonfuls of peanut butter, nuts, hard candy or cough drops, popcorn, uncooked raisins, raw hard vegetables, grapes or hot dogs and chunks of meat or poultry. Children don't learn how to grind foods like nuts until they're 4.

In general try to avoid foods that have salt or sugar added. Your baby's sensitive taste buds don't need this stimulation.

Try to accept that mealtimes with a baby are messy. Put a plastic cover or sheets of newspaper on the floor under the high chair or seat and, if it's not too chilly, let him eat without a shirt to simplify clean up.



Safety Note:

Most babies aren't able to pick up objects between the thumb and forefinger (pincer grip) until between 9-12 months, but now is a good time to begin practicing. However, once the pincer grip is mastered, your baby will be able to pick up any small item (coins, pins, etc.) and potentially choke on it. Be sure you've childproofed your home and that you've learned first aid for choking through an American Red Cross infant CPR/first aid course. Call 489-6541 or visit www.durhamredcross.org.

Milestones

Between 8 and 9 months, you:

- can move from a sitting to a lying position all by yourself.
- can lean forward and then sit up again, without falling over.
- may be beginning to say "dada" and "mama" and to associate these sounds with us.
- can bear some weight on your legs when I hold you upright.

You may:

- be able to stand holding onto someone or something.
- look for a dropped object and work to get a toy out of reach.
- may be able to pick up a tiny object with any part of your thumb and finger.
- understand the word "no," but can't be expected to obey it.

Excerpted from What to Expect the First Year (Workman, 1989) and You and Your Child (Ross Laboratories, 1987)

Suggested Reading

How to Get Your Kids to Eat...
But Not Too Much
by Elyn Satter

The First Three Years of Life
by Burton L. White

The Essential Partnership:
How Parents and Children Can Meet
the Emotional Challenges of Infancy
and Childhood
by Stanley Greenspan and
Nancy Thorndike Greenspan

Setting Limits for Babies

With a crawling baby in the house, it's easy to find yourself saying "No!" almost constantly. The better childproofed your home, the fewer times you'll have to say, "No!" and the safer your possessions. While your baby is beginning to understand what "No" means, he's too young to remember for more than a few minutes that your treasured crystal vase is a "no-no."

This lapse doesn't mean that it's pointless to set limits for your baby. It's not too early to begin teaching him words like "ouch" or "hot." But that doesn't mean you can rely on him not to reach for your cup of steaming coffee—even though he may point to it and say "hot." That level of understanding is several months away.

For each "No," it's a good idea to offer a substitute that's okay. If he starts to throw toys, offer him a ball instead. "You can throw this ball, not blocks." For the next few years, diversion will prove to be one of your best strategies for good behavior.

Babies quickly pick up on their ability to create a strong response from parents, whether it's anger, laughter or frustration. Try to keep your cool when setting limits, even though you may feel more like yelling or bursting into laughter. If you rotate playthings, this is the time to pull out a "new" toy to distract your baby.

No one's perfect, of course, and if you do lose your temper, be sure to apologize by saying something soothing such as, "I'm sorry I yelled. I was angry." Then follow your apology with a reassuring hug. **It helps to remember that your baby isn't being bad. It's his job to explore his surroundings. Using distraction is a good way to teach what's allowed and what isn't.**



Babies, of course, have more than their share of accidents. If yours spills a glass of milk as he reaches for his cracker, let him know that accidents happen: "Oops! The milk spilled." Whatever he does, be sure he knows it's his behavior that's at fault: "Biting hurts," not, "You're a bad boy." Telling a child that he's bad can lead to more negative behavior.

You're not spoiling your child if he sometimes gets what he wants. Offering him choices—"Do you want a cracker or a bagel?"—gives him a chance to develop a sense of independence.

Creeping and Crawling: How to Keep Your Baby Safe and Sound

Your baby's growing ability to move where he wants makes life more complicated. Whether he scoots on his bottom, creeps, crawls on hands and knees, or uses some combination of these motions, it's likely that during the coming months he'll end up in places you'd rather he couldn't reach. Although his newfound mobility can be exasperating for you, it's an important part of his development. As his physical independence grows, your baby relies on you to keep him safe. That means childproofing your home.

One of the best ways to childproof is to get down on your hands and knees to get a baby's eye view. Try this after you've taken the safety steps below. What's down there that you haven't noticed? Be sure you find that stray pin, crayon, button, bit of paper or penny before he does.

Falls: Most common when a baby tries to climb out of his crib. Lower crib mattress to lowest level. Once your baby is 35 inches tall, or when the side rail is less than three-quarters of his height, it's safest to move him to a mattress on the floor. Use a sturdy gate at both the top and bottom of stairs. Remove any rickety furniture. Move the crib and other furniture away from windows, and be sure they can't be opened wide enough for baby to fall through.

Drowning: Block access to the bathroom with a gate or keep the door closed. Keep the toilet lid down. Never leave your baby alone for even a second in the bathtub, in the bathroom, near a bucket of water, or near any other source of water such as a wading pool, fish pool, puddle or fountain. Babies can drown in only one inch of water.

Choking: Keep cords from window blinds and drapes out of reach. Don't give your baby a balloon, whether inflated or not. Make sure toys do not have pull cords or ribbons longer than 6-inches. Keep any item smaller than **your baby's fist** out of reach—small toys, marbles, coins, and button-sized batteries are especially dangerous. Follow the guidelines on safe finger foods in this issue of Welcome Words. Secure or remove loose knobs on furniture or doorstops.

Burns: Block access to the stove or any other source of heat such as radiators, heaters, fireplaces, irons, curling irons, ashtrays, lighters and candles. Use covers on electrical outlets, tape down electrical cords and block access with heavy furniture. Don't smoke, eat, drink or carry anything hot while holding your baby. Keep hot dishes and containers away from the edge of tables and counters and don't use tablecloths that he could pull.

Poisons: Keep all cleaning supplies, cosmetics, paints, medicines (including over the counter), vitamins, and other chemicals out of reach and in locked cabinets. Keep the trash can out of reach. Remove houseplants or be sure that even fallen leaves are out of baby's reach.

Remember that no matter how carefully you childproof your home, there's no substitute for a watchful adult. Every parent needs a break from this exhausting responsibility. It's fine to put your baby in his playpen for a brief break when he's had enough exploration, or strap him securely in his stroller and go for a long walk. You'll both enjoy a change of scene.