

Your baby's mouth, 0 to 12 months

Milestones from sucking to lumps and the open cup. Ages are approximate: every baby moves at their own pace.

	The mouth	Textures	Drinking
0 to 3 months	Sucks, swallows and breathes in rhythm	Milk	Breast or bottle
4 to 6 months	Hands and toys to the mouth; opens for the spoon	Milk; first foods at about 6 months, iron-rich	Breast or bottle
6 to 9 months	Munches; the tongue moves food around; picks up food with the fingers	Thick purées, mashed food, lumps, soft pieces	Open cup held with you; short straw
9 to 12 months	Bites a small piece; starts chewing on both sides	Lumps by 9 months at the latest; variety by 1 year	Open cup; from bottle to cup by about 12 months

Ready for solids? (about 6 months, never before 4)

- ☐ Good head control
- ☐ Sits up and leans forward
- ☐ Brings food to the mouth
- ☐ Turns the head away when full

At the table, every day

- Move one texture step at a time, no pressure
- Eat together: babies learn by watching you
- Let them touch, squash and get messy
- No teeth? Gums mash soft food
- Seated upright, always supervised

Gagging

Noisy: coughing, red face, spitting out. Stay calm and watch.

Choking

Silent: cannot breathe, cough or make a sound. Call 911.

Avoid until age 4: whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw carrots, spoonfuls of peanut butter. Cut, grate, mash or cook.

Mention to your doctor

- ☐ Coughing or gagging at most meals
- ☐ Difficult or noisy breathing while eating
- ☐ A wet voice after drinking or eating, liquid from the nose
- ☐ Very long meals, crying, arching at mealtimes
- ☐ Frequent vomiting, weight gain that worries you
- ☐ Pieces still refused at around 9 to 10 months

Who to call

- **911:** emergency, not breathing
- **811:** non-urgent, day or night (Info-Santé in Québec, Health811 in Ontario)
- **Doctor or NP:** the first stop
- **Speech-language pathologist:** sucking, chewing, swallowing, drinking

Sources: Health Canada (6 to 24 months); Canadian Paediatric Society; INSPQ (2026); ASHA (2024). General information: this guide does not replace an assessment.