

PROVIDER TALKING POINTS FOR WELL VISITS

2 months

Age-specific challenges: Families may feel like starting solids earlier than 4 months in order to “keep the baby full” or because they feel pressure from family members.

Talking points: Remind parents that introduction of solids for most babies should be from 4-6 months, and that there is some evidence that early introduction to solid foods may be associated with the development of obesity.

4 months

Age-specific challenges: Parents may be misled by store bought packaging of baby food that babies need to eat larger quantities of solid food than necessary.

Talking points: Counsel on appropriate quantities of baby foods when starting solid foods, and remind them that their primary source of calories, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals should be breast milk and/or formula. Those families that wish to prepare their own baby food should be encouraged. Homemade baby food is a great start to getting families invested in preparing nutritious food, and can be a way for parents to try different textures and combinations of foods that may not be available in the grocery store.

9-12 months

Age-specific challenges: At this age parents may notice babies getting disinterested in bland strained food, and may want to eat independently. Parents may be starting to rely on sweet drinks like fruit juice.

Talking points: Encourage families to start building adventurous eaters by introducing more textures and flavors including seasonings and mild spices. Families can be given resources for ideas on finger foods and early toddler foods that are wholesome and unprocessed. They should be encouraged to limit juice intake and make sure that babies are still getting adequate calories from breast milk and/or formula.

15-36 months

Age-specific challenges: Toddlers may show pickiness at this age and may also have an overall decreased or unpredictable appetite. They may tend to like sweet bland foods if offered and may show a preference for juice.

Talking points: Show families how the growth chart flattens in this year and that the rate of growth is much slower than the first year of life. Reassure parents that most toddlers can self regulate their caloric intake, if wholesome nutritious food is available. They

should try to avoid offering overly processed food just for the sake of “filling them up.” Juice and other sweetened beverages should be limited.

4-6 years

Age-specific challenges: Pickiness can be a problem in this age group and it can be easy to offer processed food. Advertisements on television that target this age group can entice children into wanting fast food and processed food.

Talking points: Families should be reminded that overcoming pickiness can sometimes take a dozen attempts at a particular food before a child accepts it. Persistence, creativity and a positive attitude should be used in these years. Mealtime rules about trying foods can be established, but parents should not force children to finish food that they do not like. Families may discuss with children how food that is advertised on television is often unhealthy.

7-12 years

Age-specific challenges: Kids may still exhibit pickiness and show a preference for advertised fast foods and processed foods. They may be getting excessive calories from sugar-sweetened beverages.

Talking points: Teaching children about cooking, nutrition, reading labels at the grocery store. Encourage adventurous eating. Limit sugar sweetened beverages and fruit juices, which provide excess calories.

13-18 years

Age-specific challenges: Teens may skip important meals like breakfast. They may have a busy lifestyle, which leads to less family meals and more fast foods and processed foods. They may ingest excessive calories from sugar-sweetened beverages.

Talking points: Discussing why family meals are important, why skipping breakfast may lead to being overweight, and that sugary beverages can contribute to obesity,. Discuss ways to eat healthy on-the-go.