



# THE TOP TEN MYTHS ABOUT FEEDING young children **BUSTED!**

**MYTH:** Babies should eat every 3 hours.

**fact:** Babies develop healthy eating habits and establish good feeding relationships with their parents when they are allowed to follow their appetites instead of the clock.

**MYTH:** If a baby nurses often, it means that Mom is not making enough milk.

**fact:** Babies nurse often during a growth spurt to rev up the milk-making process so they'll have plenty of milk to meet their growth demands.

**MYTH:** Giving your baby cereal at age 8 weeks will help her sleep through the night.

**fact:** There is no scientific evidence to back up this claim. However, giving your baby cereal before age 4 months can contribute to allergies and gluten intolerance.

**MYTH:** Juice is a good substitute for milk.

**fact:** While juice can fill in for a missing fruit serving for older babies, juice doesn't provide the protein, calcium, and vitamin D that milk has. It should be limited to 4–6 ounces per day.

**MYTH:** A child needs whole milk until age 5.

**fact:** As a toddler's growth slows down, he doesn't need the extra fat in whole milk—a switch to lowfat or even skim milk can be made at age 2.

**MYTH:** Babies should have a very bland diet until at least age 2.

**fact:** You'll help your child get used to the flavors of food your family typically eats by adding small amounts of spices between ages 8 and 10 months.

**MYTH:** Being very strict with eating habits will prevent temper tantrums at mealtime.

**fact:** Setting overly rigid food rules can lead to major food battles. It's better to set appropriate limits—but to be flexible when needed.

**MYTH:** Kids will eat the food they need only when they get strong encouragement—even if that means bribing with dessert.

**fact:** In general, kids have good control of their appetites—they eat what they need to grow and thrive. If forced or bribed to eat, kids are taught to override their natural hunger cues.



**MYTH:** If your baby or toddler doesn't like a food after 3 tries, you should give up—she'll never eat it!

**fact:** Sometimes it takes up to 15 tries of a new food for a child to like it.

**MYTH:** A fat baby is a healthy baby.

**fact:** Although babies tend to be round at birth, they gradually thin out when they become mobile. As kids get older, excess body fat is not a sign of good health—it's a sign that a child is being overfed.

**MYTHS and facts**  
taken from:

**Baby Bites**  
by Bridget Swinney, MS, RD  
Available in bookstores nationwide.

