FN715 (Reviewed Oct. 2026)

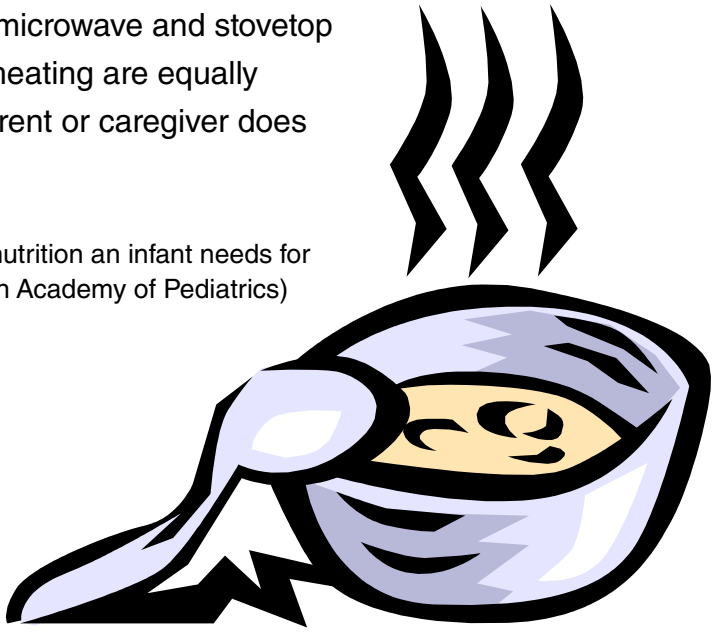
Safe Food for Babies and Children:
Heating Solid Food Safely

Babies grow quickly during the first year of life, usually doubling in weight by 4 to 6 months of age and tripling in weight by 1 year. Visits to the doctor's office for checkups are important during this time of rapid growth to ensure your baby is receiving good nutrition. The types of textures and foods infants are able to eat during the first year change dramatically. Solid foods usually are introduced to infants at approximately 4 to 6 months of age.* As with infant bottles, it is important to heat solid foods carefully to avoid burns to the baby's mouth and throat.

Whether warming bottles or solid foods, it is ALWAYS important to use safe heating practices to keep your baby happy and healthy. Although you may be an expert at feeding your little one, remember that babysitters and family members may not know how to heat bottles and food correctly. Leaving complete instructions in a handy location, such as on the refrigerator door, may help you and the caregiver feel comfortable and relaxed come feeding time.

Two methods are used to heat solid foods for babies. These methods include microwave and stovetop heating. Both means of heating are equally appropriate when the parent or caregiver does them carefully.

*Breast milk provides all the nutrition an infant needs for the first six months. (American Academy of Pediatrics)



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Tips for Heating Solid Foods

- To prevent uneven heating, never microwave solid baby foods in the jar. “Hot spots” could result. Instead, transfer the food from the jar to a microwave-safe dish and cover before microwaving.
- Always transfer the desired amount of food from the jar to a separate dish. Feeding infants directly from the jar may introduce bacteria into the food that can cause foodborne illness if used at a later feeding.
- Stir food and turn the dish often during the microwave process to distribute the heat evenly. Let stand for at least 30 seconds, then stir again.
- Taste-test the food with a different utensil before serving. Babies should not be fed foods heated higher than 90 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. In many microwaves, this means heating 4 ounces of food for only 15 seconds.
- Avoid microwaving baby food meats, eggs or other high-fat foods. Due to the high fat content of these foods, splattering and overheating may occur easily. These foods and others can be heated safely over hot water instead.
- To warm food on the stove, place it directly in a saucepan over low heat and warm slowly. Stir often during the heating process and taste-test using a separate spoon before serving.
- Throw away leftovers to avoid food poisoning. Harmful bacteria from the baby’s mouth may be introduced into the food, where it can grow and multiply even after refrigeration and reheating.

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This material is based upon work supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under Agreement No. 2002-51110-01512.

For more information about nutrition and food safety, visit the NDSU Extension website:
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