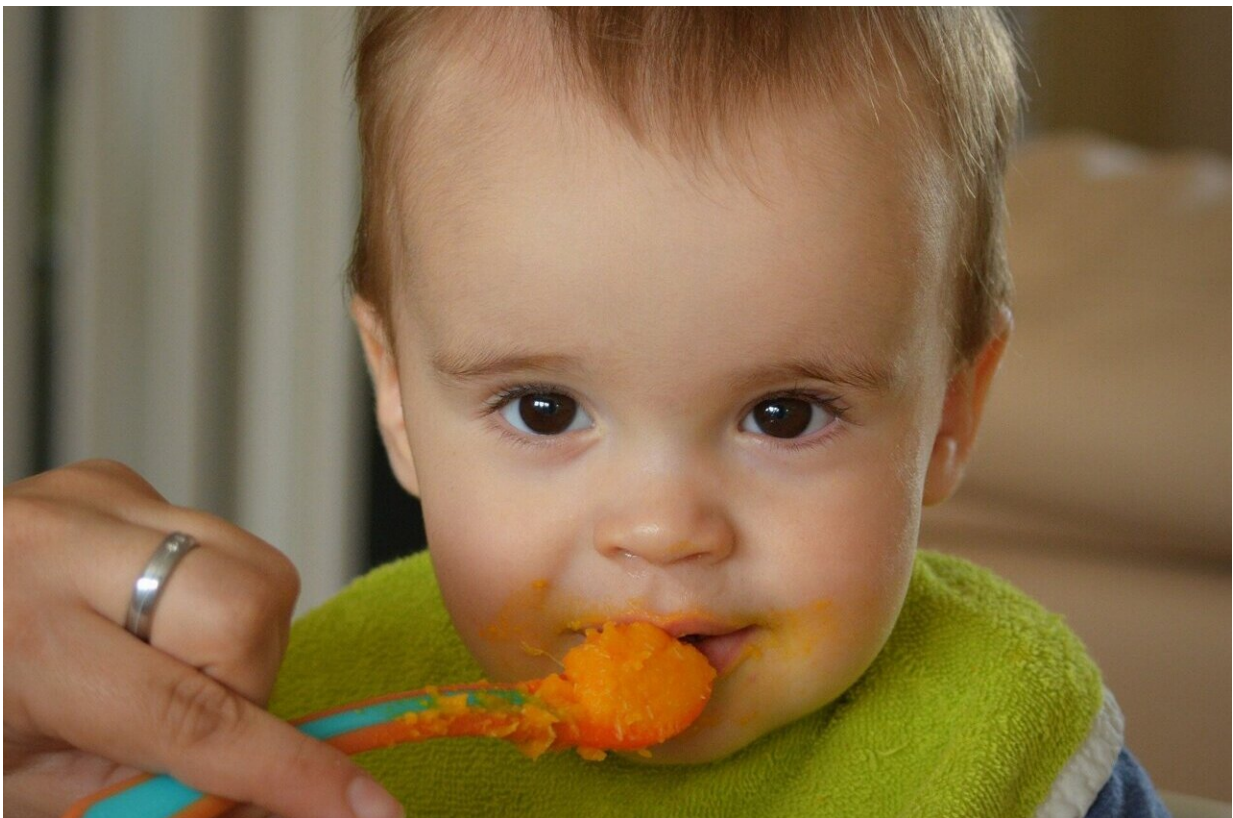


Mothers' recall of early childhood feeding guidance from health care providers is inconsistent

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Health care providers (HCPs) usually conduct 14 wellness visits with children before the age of five, and are often a trusted source of

information for mothers. A research article featured in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* discusses mothers' recollection of key feeding guidance recommendations that can affect children's long-term health.

"Many studies have looked at the nutrition guidance shared by HCPs with the families of young [children](#), but few studies have described what guidance parents recall receiving," according to author Andrea McGowan, MPH, who was affiliated with the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA, at the time this study was conducted. "This study fills that gap by analyzing the specific topics mothers remember and what factors influenced that recall."

Data for this analysis come from the 2017-2019 National Survey of Family Growth, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. Among the 6,141 women who participated in the study, 1,632 had a child aged six months to five years in their home at the time of the survey. These women were asked to recall their child's HCP discussing when to introduce solid foods and guidance on the specific feeding topics referenced in "Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents" from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The study asked questions related to offering foods with many different tastes and textures, not forcing a child to finish food or bottles, offering a variety of fruits and vegetables, limiting foods and drinks with added sugar, and limiting eating meals in front of the television or other electronics.

Among mothers who recalled their HCPs talking about the introduction of [solid foods](#), 37% recalled being told to introduce [solid food](#) before six

months, when the recommendation is to wait until about six months of age and not before four months. More than half of mothers recalled an HCP discussing between four and five topics on early feeding guidance, with 31% recalling only two or three topics.

Mothers with higher education levels or older mothers were more likely to recall these feeding discussions. Of the five nutrition topics, offering a variety of fruits and vegetables had the highest percentage of recall, while less than half of the mothers recalled the recommendation to limit meals in front of the television or other electronic devices.

"Pediatricians report spending an average of 18 minutes with children and their parents during wellness visits with many health topics covered during that limited time," states McGowan. "Innovative strategies tailored to families' needs might alleviate the HCP burden and could enhance parental recall, especially when messaging is culturally relevant and personalized."

More information: Patterns in Mothers' Recollection of Health Care Providers' Young Child Feeding Recommendations, *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jneb.2022.08.011](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2022.08.011)

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