

American Dairy Reflection

Before I graduated from my undergraduate program, I completed several nutrition courses each semester, and my professor, who was also the head of the nutrition department and had worked in pediatrics for years, ensured we acquired all the knowledge needed for nutrition across all stages of life, with a particular emphasis on the early stages. However, this was nearly two years ago, and while reading the American Dairy document, it felt like a flashback to the past. The first thing that stood out to me was the recommendation to introduce multiple foods on multiple occasions but to start slowly to monitor for any adverse reactions. I believe this is a pivotal time to introduce foods and develop the child's palate, and I know from hearing my former professor's stories about children who were not introduced to new foods early, and when parents tried later in life, the child rarely adapted to the new food. Something I was unaware of, and I'm glad I reviewed the handout multiple times, was the section on honey. It is widely known that individuals with allergies can buy honey from a local market to consume pollen and other substances to build tolerance, but I would never have guessed that a baby could develop botulism from honey. I am curious and plan to research this mechanism after completing this reflection to understand the cause. I believe the section on adopting a vegetarian diet for a baby and requiring a disclosure is an excellent idea. Although this diet offers many health benefits, I think, in addition to consulting the pediatrician, parents should also consult a dietitian to ensure comprehensive oversight and that nothing is overlooked. Another observation about parents is the pride they take in their baby progressing with walking and eating, but I believe providing guidance on proper posture, such as sitting upright and moving their hands correctly, could help parents understand the dos and don'ts for their baby's safety. One of the most critical aspects of eating and a child's development is family dining. While I recognize this may not be possible for

all meals, I believe setting a positive example during meals can not only influence a child's eating habits now but also positively impact their eating behaviors in the future. Although this is a guide to feeding, I think it would be valuable to include information on the impact of breastfeeding and formula feeding on the microbiome in those sections. I understand that not all parents can breastfeed, but I believe including this information may encourage parents who can breastfeed to continue this feeding option rather than switching to formula. The document mentions that breastfeeding is recommended, but I would appreciate understanding the reasons behind this. They repeatedly state that cow's milk is not recommended from 0–24 months, and I am unclear about the rationale. I am not challenging the recommendation, but I am curious about the reasoning. After reviewing all the information and collecting the questions and insights I have, I am eager to search multiple databases to find answers to my questions, and I will update this submission with those findings.