What to feed a baby goat

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Fridge cheat sheet

WEAK, COLD OR ORPHANED NEWBORN KID? WARM IT FIRST

1. Below about 102 °F by rectal thermometer, limp or not sucking? Call a vet now.
2. Cold, unfed and over about 5 hours old? Call the vet before heating it: it may need glucose or tubed colostrum first, or it can have seizures.
3. Dry it and warm it with towels or a warm box, without overheating.
4. Never bottle a chilled kid, and never drip, squirt or syringe milk into its mouth.
5. Warm and able to suck? Give colostrum right away, ideally in the first hour of life and within 6 hours.
6. Too weak to suck? It needs tube feeding by a vet or someone trained to do it.

Find a goat vet (AASRP directory): aasrp.org

Vet help from Iowa State Dairy Goat Extension: dairygoatextension.org

✓ Safe staples

- **Colostrum** – 10% of body weight in the first 24 hours
- **Colostrum replacer** – Replacer, not supplement
- **Goat milk** – First choice, pasteurized
- **Kid milk replacer** – Goat replacer, mixed to the label
- **Whole cow's milk** – Whole and pasteurized, nothing added
- **Fresh water in a bucket** – Clean, in a pan, from day one
- **Grass hay** – Mold-free, always out from 1 week
- **Pasture grass** – Introduce slowly, hay first
- **Safe leafy browse** – Identified safe plants only
- **Kid starter (creep feed)** – About 18% protein, fresh daily
- **Loose goat minerals** – Goat mineral, loose, kept dry

! Small amounts only

- **Lamb milk replacer** – Only if labeled for kids too
- **Electrolyte solution** – For scours, with vet guidance
- **Alfalfa hay** – Limit for bucks and wethers
- **Corn, oats and grain** – Measured, introduced slowly
- **Apple** – Weaned only, a few slices
- **Banana** – Weaned only, a small piece
- **Carrot** – Weaned only, small pieces
- **Lettuce** – Weaned only, a leaf or two
- **Grapes** – Weaned only, one or two

⊗ Never feed

- **Calf or all-species replacer** – Bloat and copper risk
- **Plant milks and soy replacer** – Young kids need milk protein
- **Syrup or cream in milk** – Homemade add-ins upset the gut
- **Raw milk, unknown source** – Can pass CAE and Johne's
- **Water from a bottle** – Water poisoning risk
- **Bread and bakery scraps** – Linked to rumen acidosis
- **Moldy hay or feed** – Listeriosis risk
- **Cattle, horse or other feed** – Urea, wrong drugs or minerals
- **Chocolate and avocado** – Both toxic
- **Rhododendron and azalea** – Small amounts can kill
- **Yew and oleander** – Deadly, including clippings
- **Wilted cherry leaves** – Cyanide when wilted

Feeding schedule

Age	Looks like	Food	Amount	How often
First 24 hours	Newborn; stands and hunts for a teat	Colostrum	At least 10% of body weight in total: about 13 oz for an 8 lb kid, in feeds of 2–4 oz	4–6 feeds, the first within 1 hour if possible
2–4 days	Learning the bottle; sleeps between feeds	Goat milk, kid replacer or whole cow's milk	3–5 oz a feed, 12–24 oz a day. About 10–15% of body weight a day	4–6 feeds a day
5–14 days	Active and playful; starts mouthing hay and feed	Milk, plus a little kid starter and good hay from about 1 week	4–6 oz a feed, 18–28 oz of milk a day. Never over 20% of body weight	3–4 feeds a day (Ohio State keeps 6 for the first week)
15–21 days	Nibbling hay, grass and starter; rumination starts	Milk, starter, hay, water, loose goat minerals	6–8 oz a feed, 24–32 oz of milk a day	3–4 feeds a day
3–8 weeks	Chewing cud; eats more solid feed each week	Milk, starter, hay, safe browse, water, minerals	28–36 oz of milk a day, no more than 16 oz in one feed. Solids free choice	3 feeds a day, never fewer than 2 before weaning
8–12 weeks	Rumen working well; ready only when solids intake is high	Starter, hay, water and a shrinking milk ration	Wean at 2.5 times birth weight, eating about half a pound of starter a day plus hay (full-size breeds)	Drop to 1 bottle a day for 3–5 days, then stop
12 weeks and up	Eating like a small adult goat	Hay, pasture or browse, water, loose goat minerals; grain only as needed	Forage free choice. Grain for growing kids about 0.5–1% of body weight a day	Hay all day; split bigger grain rations into 3 or more meals