What to feed a baby pigeon

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Fridge cheat sheet

BEFORE YOU FEED ANYTHING

1. Warm it first: a heating pad on low under half the box, or a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel.
2. Feathered and walking? It may be a fledgling its parents still feed.
3. Don't drip food or water into its beak.
4. Never give milk or bread. A squab needs warm hand-feeding formula, fed only when its crop is empty.
5. Call a licensed rehabber and ask if they take pigeons.

Find a wildlife rehabilitator near you: ahnow.org

Pigeon-friendly rescues (Palomacy list): pigeonrescue.org

Safe staples

- **Kaytee Exact hand-feeding formula** – Main formula. Serve at 102–106 °F, crop empty
- **Roudybush Squab Formula** – Squab formula, switch at 7–14 days
- **Harrison's hand-rearing formula** – Recovery, then Juvenile formula by day 21
- **Pigeon and dove seed mix** – Weaning staple from about 3–4 weeks
- **Thawed frozen peas** – Thawed, warm, 5–6 at a time
- **Thawed corn** – Thawed kernels or cracked corn
- **Pigeon pellets** – About half the diet once weaned
- **Water** – Dish once eating seed. Never drip into beak

Small amounts only

- **Chick or game bird starter crumbles** – About a quarter of the seed mix
- **Grit** – A pinch after weaning, never for nestlings
- **Chopped greens and vegetables** – Finely chopped, a few times a week
- **Rice** – Short-term only, cooked or raw
- **Oats and oatmeal** – Whole oats in seed mix only, no porridge
- **Cooked egg** – Only blended into a rehab formula
- **Banana** – Rare treat for weaned birds only
- **Grapes** – Seedless, halved, rare treat
- **Mealworms and worms** – Not for squabs. Rare treat for adults
- **Sugar water** – Pinch of sugar and salt in a dish only

Never feed

- **Milk** – Birds can't digest lactose
- **Bread** – Filler, choking risk for young birds
- **Cheese and dairy** – Birds are lactose intolerant
- **Peanuts** – Choking and aflatoxin risk
- **Avocado** – Persin damages the heart
- **Chocolate** – Theobromine and caffeine are toxic
- **Onion and garlic** – Harm blood cells, liver and kidneys
- **Crackers, chips and salty snacks** – Salt dehydrates birds
- **Puppy or dog food** – Wrong diet for a seed-eating bird
- **Cat food** – Wrong diet for a seed-eating bird

Feeding schedule

Age	Looks like	Food	Amount	How often
0–1 week	Sparse yellow down, eyes closed until about day 4–5, can't stand	Hand-feeding formula, mixed very thin	10–12% of body weight per feed (about 1.5 ml at 15 g)	5–6 feeds in daylight, each only once the crop is empty
1–2 weeks	Eyes open, pin feathers pushing through the down	Formula, mixed thicker as the label directs	10–12% of body weight per feed	4–5 feeds a day
2–3 weeks	Feathers opening over most of the body, yellow down on the head	Formula; a few soaked seeds near the end of week 2	10–12% of body weight per feed	3–4 feeds a day
3–4 weeks	Almost fully feathered, down tufts on the head, walks and flaps	Formula, pigeon seed mix, thawed peas, a water dish	Formula 10–12% of body weight (about 30 ml at 300 g); seed free choice	Formula 2–3 times a day; drop the morning feed once it eats seed
4–6 weeks	Fully feathered, leaves the nest at 25–32 days, squeaks and flutters when hungry	Seed mix, thawed peas and corn, pellets, water	Seed free choice	Formula once a day only if the crop isn't filling, then stop
6 weeks and up	Looks adult; squeaking stops around 6–8 weeks	Seed mix or pellets, a little greens and grit, fresh water	About 2 tablespoons a day to start, adjusted so it's eaten by evening	Eats on its own

Feeding log (weigh before feeding, same time each day)

Date	Time	Weight (g)	Amount (ml)	Crop empty? Droppings	Notes