



Starting on Solids:

How to Introduce Your Baby to Solid Foods



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COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Solid Foods Help Your Baby Grow

Breast milk or formula meets your baby's nutritional needs for six months according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. However, by six months, your baby will be ready for solid foods. Introduce your baby to solid foods to help shape your child's lifelong eating habits and give your child the nutrition needed to grow.

Is Your Baby Ready For Solid Foods?

Babies may be ready for solid foods if they:

Most babies can have solid foods at 6 months of age. However, each baby's development is different.

- Can sit up with support
- Have good head and neck control
- Do not push food out with their tongues instead of swallowing
- Put their hands in their mouths
- Show an interest in food by opening their mouths and leaning forward
- Can show they are full by leaning back or turning away

If your baby does some or all of the above, ask your doctor if your baby can start eating solids earlier.

Add Solids Slowly to Your Baby's Diet

- Give new foods at the start of the meal.
- Give your baby one new food for a few days. Wait 3-5 days before trying another new food. If your baby has any allergic reactions such as diarrhea, rash, or vomiting, stop feeding the new food and tell your child's doctor.
- Use a silicone baby spoon to protect your child's gums. .
- Make sure the food is not too hot before feeding it to your baby.
- Let your baby set the pace for feeding.



Make Your Own Baby Food

Premade food may be convenient for busy families, but homemade food is cheaper and fresher. When cooking for your family, set aside some food for your baby before adding seasonings. Your baby should learn to eat foods with different textures: smooth, mashed, chopped, and small pieces.

○ Smooth Baby Foods

Use a blender or baby food grinder to make this. Start with baby cereal and plain baby foods made with one ingredient. When your baby is used to plain foods, try to feed a mixture of pretested foods, including meat, vegetables and fruit.

○ Mashed

When your baby can eat smooth foods, offer your food mashed with a fork. Foods such as noodles, rice, beans, soft vegetables and fruits, cooked egg yolk, meat, and tofu.

○ Chopped

When your baby can chew and swallow mashed foods, offer foods chopped into tiny pieces by a knife or food processor.

○ Small Pieces

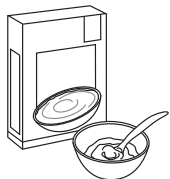
When your baby is around 9 to 10 months, give your baby small pieces of soft foods, such as soft fruits, cooked vegetables, and cut-up noodles. By the time your baby is one year old, he or she should be able to eat most of your family's foods.



When preparing your baby's food, avoid adding salt, sugar, oil, soy sauce, oyster sauce, or other seasonings to your baby's food. Also, make sure your baby gets enough protein from meat, beans, and tofu. Your baby will not get enough protein and calcium from gravies and soup broth.

Introduce Foods One at A Time

IRON FORTIFIED BABY RICE CEREALS



Starting at 4 to 6 months

Offer iron fortified baby rice cereal as the first baby food. Mix 4 to 5 teaspoons of breast milk or formula with every 1 teaspoon of fortified baby rice cereal and feed with a spoon. Start with 1 teaspoon of fortified baby rice cereal. And then slowly increase to ½ cup (4 ounces) of fortified baby cereal per day. It can be thickened over time by adding less liquid. Do NOT add any cereal to bottle feeds unless instructed by your doctor.

- 1 teaspoon at a time then increase to 1-2 tablespoons at a time
- 2-3 times a day

MEATS



Starting at 6 to 8 months

Feed your baby small pieces of meat, such as chicken, pork, beef, or turkey. Chop up meat into small pieces, and peel off the fat and skin before blending or serving. You can also use premade baby food made with meat.

- 1-2 ounces
- 1-2 times a day

VEGETABLES



Starting at 6 to 8 months

Give vegetables like peas, carrots and yams. Avoid corn as it is harder to digest. Remove skin and seeds. Vegetables need to be cooked so they can be easily pureed or mashed.

- 1-2 tablespoons at a time
- 2-3 times a day

FRUITS



Starting at 6 to 8 months

Fresh fruit is the best. Pureed apples and pears or mashed bananas and avocados are good to start. To reduce the choking risk, smash or quarter fruits, such as blueberries, strawberries. Remove fruit skins and seeds, such as blueberries, grapes.

- 1-2 tablespoons at a time
- 2-3 times a day

Follow These Feeding Tips

- Avoid feeding your baby soup before a meal.
- Do not feed your baby hard or large pieces of food to prevent choking.
- Do not put cereal in your baby's bottle.
- Avoid chewing foods for your baby – this can spread germs.
- Make sure your baby sit upright at the dinner table when being fed.
- Avoid overfeeding your baby. Your baby should only eat until full. Babies have had enough to eat when they:
 - Close their mouths when offered the spoon
 - Spit out food that is being fed
 - Turn their heads away or lean back from the spoon
- After feeding your baby, throw away any unfinished food. Saliva from the spoon will cause the food to spoil more quickly.

Store Homemade Baby Food Safely

Store unused homemade baby food in the fridge for no more than two days. You can also store baby food in the freezer this way:

1. Spoon food into an ice cube tray.
2. Place tray in a plastic bag and store in freezer.
3. When food cubes are frozen, take out of the tray and place in a resealable plastic bag.
4. Mark the date on each bag. Place the bag back in the freezer. Use food within one month.

One day before feeding, thaw the food in the fridge. Avoid thawing at room temperature as this allows bacteria can grow. Once the food is thawed, heat it using the microwave. You can also place it in a bowl and steam for a few minutes. Do not refreeze food that has been thawed.



Not All Foods Are Safe For Your Baby

Introducing allergy foods, such as creamy peanut butter, cooked egg, or seafood when your baby starts solids is safe and may help lower the risk of those food allergies. Talk to your pediatrician when to start allergy foods if parent or sibling have certain food allergy. After giving solids for a few months, your baby should have no more than 24-32 ounces of breast milk or formula a day and eat a balanced diet of meats, cereal, vegetables, and fruits each day. However, your baby should avoid these foods:

X Honey

Honey can contain the bacteria that causes infant botulism. Wait until your child is one year old before giving honey.

X Small, hard, or sticky foods

Small, sticky, or hard foods like corn, nuts, grapes, cherries, raisins, and chunky peanut butter can easily cause your baby to choke. Also avoid candy, hot dogs, popcorn, and raw carrots.

X Spicy or greasy foods

Spicy or greasy foods, such as fast food, can upset your baby's digestive system.

X Cow's milk

Cow's milk does not have all the nutrients your baby needs, such as iron. Your baby can have whole cow's milk after turning one year old.

**Learn
More about
Feeding Your
Baby**

The WIC Program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) provides nutrition education and nutritious foods for eligible women, infants, and children. Call 311 for the WIC agency nearest to you.





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