

Starting your Baby on Solid Foods

At about 4-6 months of age, your baby can sit with support while keeping her head steady. She is constantly grabbing at everything and putting objects in her mouth. These are signals that she is ready to start eating from a spoon. This is a great opportunity to introduce your baby to eating solid food and experience new flavors, textures, and temperatures.

When starting a new food, it is always best to introduce only one new food at a time. Try giving one new food to your baby for 3-4 days in a row before adding another one. This will give you time to notice any allergic reactions or other side effects such as diarrhea, constipation, vomiting, gas, or rash. The following foods can be introduced:

Single grain, iron fortified cereals made of rice, oatmeal, and barley. Start by making a very thin mixture by adding one teaspoon of cereal to 1-2 ounces of breast milk or formula. Feed your baby with a spoon. As your baby learns to accept the spoon and move the food from the front of his mouth to the back without choking, you can gradually increase the thickness of the meal by adding more cereal. Too much cereal can cause constipation. After your baby can tolerate a spoon, you may introduce other foods slowly including:

Fruits and Vegetables such as apples, banana, peach, pear, sweet potato, potato, squash, spinach, peas, carrots, beans, and tofu.

Meats such as chicken, turkey, veal, beef, and pork.

Peanut butter and tree nut butters should be introduced between 5-11 months. If your baby has moderate to severe Eczema, please talk to your Doctor about possible referral to an Allergist before trying peanut butter for the first time.

There is nothing special about jars or pouches of baby food purchased at the store. Baby food can be easily made by pureeing fresh ingredients and mixing with breast milk or formula. When making your own foods, do not add salt or sugar, as they are unnecessary.

How many times a day? Generally, start at 4-6 months of age with one solid meal daily. Most infants are taking two meals daily soon thereafter. At nine months of age, most infants are eating 3 meals a day, and are very interested in what the rest of the family is eating. Also at this time, babies develop their pincer grip and begin to eat soft easily dissolving finger foods like puffs, stars, and cheerios. Eventually overcooked pasta, rice, peas, carrots, meat and chicken that she can pick up with her fingers can be given. As the amount of solid food increases, you can expect your baby to take less breast milk or formula. After 4 months of age, 4-6 ounces of water can be given daily.

The following foods should not be introduced before 12 months of age:

Honey, Karo syrup, corn syrup

whole milk

Citrus fruit and tomatoes may cause rash where it touches your babies skin

Dangerous Foods: DO NOT FEED CHILDREN UNDER 4 YEARS OF AGE FOODS THAT ARE ROUND, SMALL, AND HARD. These foods can easily cause choking. Do not give your baby hot dogs, chunks of meat, grape, raisins, popcorn, hard candies (tic-tacs or lifesavers), or raw carrots. In addition, do not let them play with small household items such as balloons, coins, marbles, small toy parts, aluminum foil, plastic wrappers, or pen caps.