

Starting Solids for Infants

CUES THAT BABY IS READY TO START EATING SOLIDS

When your baby is 4-6 months old, watch for these signs that your baby is developmentally ready for spoon feeding:

- Good head control
- Ability to sit up with support and maintain balance
- Ability to use his/her hands to reach for objects
- Gag reflex begins to fade
- Ready and willing to chew
- Eager and interested in eating

HOW TO START

- Using an infant seat, place your baby in an upright position using blanket or towel rolls to help provide good support
- Face your baby so you can follow his or her cues
- Start with **spoon feedings** once per day
- As your baby learns to feed and is enjoying it, increase to **two feedings per day** and eventually three per day
- Introduce **one new food every 3-4 days** to help identify food allergies or reactions that may occur
 - Watch for skin rash, vomiting, diarrhea, or wheezing – they can be a sign of allergic reaction
- Start using the sippy cup between 6 and 8 months of age
- In the first few months, spoon feeds will only provide a small percentage of your baby's nutrition. By 10 months, intake of spoon feeds will increase to about half of his/her total intake.

EXAMPLES OF FOODS FOR VARIOUS STAGES

Baby's Age	Food Examples
4-6 months	Single-grain iron-fortified rice cereal (it should be very liquid for the first feed – try 1 teaspoon of cereal to 5 teaspoons of breast milk or formula) Infant dry iron-fortified oatmeal cereal
6-8 months	Strained vegetables and strained fruits
9-12 months	Teething biscuits, graham crackers, and Cheerios (more textured foods) Yogurt (whole milk variety), hard-boiled egg yolk (no white), cottage cheese, strained meats, pudding, pastina, soft cooked rice, mashed meatballs, and toast

There is no nutritional value to offering juice. If served, use a small amount of **apple** or **pear juice**, which is well tolerated by babies. Never offer juice in the bottle (unless it is used for constipation), and always mix it with an equal amount of water. Limit quantity to 4 oz/day (before dilution). And keep in mind that offering juice in the sippy cup may make it more difficult to transition to milk in the cup.



FOODS TO AVOID

Until 1 year of age, babies should avoid:

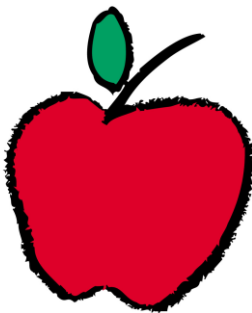
- **Unpasteurized cheeses, dairy products and juices**
- **Chocolate**
- **Fish and shellfish**
- **Pure honey**
- **Egg white and cow's milk**

FOOD SAFETY

- When using jarred baby food, only remove a small amount from the jar at a time. To avoid contamination NEVER feed baby directly from the jar of food, and do not return uneaten food to an opened jar.
- Store unused baby food in the refrigerator and use within 48 hours.

REMEMBER...

- Have fun!!!
- Watch your baby's cues - if your baby turns away or purses his/her lips he/she is probably done.
- Don't get frustrated – if baby seems uninterested try again in a couple days.
- For the best feeding experience, set a routine that suits your baby and is free of distractions.

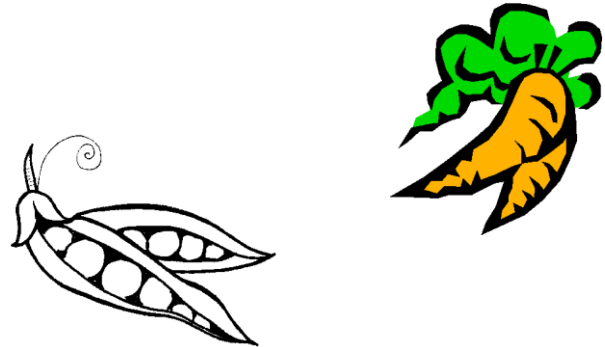


Breastfeeding moms should avoid **nuts** IF there is a strong family history of allergies.

Infants with family history of food allergies, eczema, or asthma should avoid:

- **Eggs** until age 2
- **Fish** until age 3
- **Peanut butter** and **tree nuts** until age 3

- Use HOT soapy water to wash all items used to feed baby such as cups, bottles, spoons, and bowls.
- Perishable items should be refrigerated or eaten within 2 hours of being opened.
- Avoid fresh-squeezed juices unless they're specifically marked "pasteurized."



Websites to visit for more information:

Safe Handling of Food

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~pregnant/once.html>

Kids Health – Feeding Solids

http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/pregnancy_newborn/formulafeed/formulafeed_solids.html

Dr. Spock and Feeding Solids

<http://www.drspock.com/topic/0,1504,251,00.html>