# INTRODUCING THE TOP 9

A no-stress guide to introducing food allergens to your infant.

## WHAT ARE THE TOP 9 ALLERGENS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milk</th>
<th>Eggs</th>
<th>Wheat</th>
<th>Shellfish</th>
<th>Fish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tree Nuts</td>
<td>Peanuts</td>
<td>Soy</td>
<td>Sesame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## WHY SHOULD YOU INTRODUCE ALLERGENS EARLY?

Research shows that introducing the top 9 allergens around 6 months can help avoid food allergies.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU INTRODUCE ALLERGENS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Risk</th>
<th>Moderate Risk</th>
<th>High Risk</th>
<th>Parent/Sibling has Food Allergies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby does not have eczema or a known food allergy.</td>
<td>Baby has mild to moderate eczema.</td>
<td>Baby has severe eczema, egg allergy or both.</td>
<td>Sibling has a food allergy or parent has a food allergy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce at 6 months.</td>
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<td>Check with your doctor first. Your doctor may suggest a blood test or send you to an allergy specialist for additional testing.</td>
<td>Research shows no connection between siblings and food allergies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss with your health care provider.</td>
<td></td>
<td>If test results are negative, introduce allergens at 4-6 months at home or office.</td>
<td>If a sibling has a food allergy, introduce the food.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If test results are positive, avoid introduction.</td>
<td>If a parent has a food allergy and the baby does not have severe eczema, try to introduce the food as well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
START WITH LOW-RISK FOODS.
- A “top 9” food allergen should not be one of the first foods you feed baby.
- Start with meats or iron-fortified cereal, and then move on to fruits and vegetables before introducing a “top 9” food.

INTRODUCE ONE NEW FOOD AT A TIME & EARLY IN THE DAY.
- If baby does have a reaction, you will want to make sure you will be able to pinpoint what caused it. After 3-5 days you can introduce the next allergen.
- You want to be able to observe baby throughout the day and monitor for a reaction.
  - Feeding baby a “top 9” allergen at night and going to bed is not recommended.
- Provide a small amount of the allergen in a way that is easy for baby to eat.
  - Example: Peanut butter mixed with 2-3 tsp water or breastmilk, smoothed onto a rice cake.

WATCH FOR A REACTION.
- Feed and observe baby. If no reaction, continue to feed.
- Lip swelling, vomiting, widespread hives, face, or tongue swelling, wheezing, or repetitive coughing are severe reactions.
- Difficulty breathing is rare but possible. If baby has difficulty breathing call 911.

BE REPETITIVE.
- If no reaction, continue to feed baby the top 9 foods as often as possible.

HOW TO INTRODUCE...

PEANUTS
- 1 tsp peanut butter with 1 tsp water.
- 1 tsp peanut butter mixed in with ½ cup rice cereal.

MILK
- 2 oz yogurt.
- 1 tbsp plain cottage cheese smeared on a rice cake.

EGGS
- Scrambled eggs.
- Hard-boiled egg mashed with a fork.

SOY
- Tofu mashed with a fork.
- Edamame soft-boiled and mashed with a fork.

TREE NUTS
- 1 tsp almond butter mixed with 1 tsp water.
- 1 tsp almond butter mixed in 4 oz plain yogurt.

FISH
- Salmon burger grilled and mashed with a fork.
- 2 oz mashed cod fillet.

SESAME
- 1 tsp tahini mixed with 1 tsp water.
- 1 tsp hummus made with sesame.

WHEAT
- 4 oz cream of wheat.
- Wheat-based cereal softened with water.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES:
1. https://www.childrensmercy.org/parent-ish/2022/05/newfoodallergy/
2. https://www.preventallergies.org/
3. https://kidswithfoodallergies.org/

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