

Feeding Your Baby

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service • Oklahoma State University



Feeding Solid Foods

Between 4 and 6 months is when babies are physically, psychologically, and nutritionally ready for solids. DO NOT begin solids too early. Waiting to feed solids makes it easier to introduce them, and your baby has less chance of developing food allergies and has a more mature digestive system.

When is your baby ready for solids?

Clues include the following: sits with support and holds head erect; brings hand to mouth after spoon or nipple is removed; makes up and down chewing motions with the jaw; the tongue does not protrude against the spoon, forcing food out; as the spoon is removed is able to draw in the lower lip.

Hints for Introducing Solids

- Prevent choking by keeping your baby's head upright or by seating your baby in a high chair.
- DO NOT use an infant feeder. Being fed with a spoon is a learning experience.
- Use a small, long-handled, shallow-bowled spoon. Place food toward the back of your baby's tongue. Use a separate spoon for heating the food and feeding. A hot spoon can burn your baby's mouth.
- To prevent saliva from being added to the jar, DO NOT feed straight from the jar. Remove the amount of food to be fed from the jar and serve in a separate dish. DO NOT use cracked dishes.
- Offer a small amount of breast milk or formula when beginning solid foods. As solids are introduced, breast milk or formula intake will gradually decrease.
- DO NOT force your baby to eat. Begin with 1-2 teaspoons and gradually increase. If a food is rejected, try it again later.
- Offer new foods one at a time. Introduce two new foods per week and offer the same food at least 3 days. If an allergic reaction (hives, vomiting, diarrhea) occurs, you will know the cause.
- DO NOT use honey, which may cause infant botulism, until after 12 months.
- Use a variety of simple foods with NO seasonings.
- Appetite will vary at each feeding. Signs such as fussing or refusing food may signal your baby is full.



Suggested Readings:

Gerber (1994). *Dietary guidelines for infants*. Fremont, MI: Author.

Gerber (1994). *Feeding your baby*. Fremont, MI: Author.

Lambert-Lagace, L. (1991). *Feeding your baby: from conception to age two*. Emeryville, CA: Surrey Books.

Reference List:

American Academy of Pediatrics (1993). *Pediatric nutrition handbook*. Elk Grove Village, IL: Author.

Baker, S.S. (1994). Introduce fruits, vegetables and grains, but don't overdo high fiber foods. *Pediatric Basics*, 69, 16-18.

Kleinman, R.E. (1994). Build to a variety of foods. *Pediatric Basics*, 69, 2-7.



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