

FEEDING YOUR INFANT SOLIDS

Here are some easy tips to assess if your infant is ready to begin solids:

- Can your baby hold his or her head in a steady, upright position?
- Can your baby sit with support?
- Is your baby mouthing his or her hands or toys?
- Is your baby showing a desire for food by leaning forward and opening his or her mouth?

If the answer is yes to all of these questions, then your baby is most likely developmentally ready to start solids.

Take your time when starting solids. Keep in mind that breast milk and/or formula will continue to be the main source of nutrition throughout the first year of life.

Go slow and introduce one new food every 3-5 days

The purpose of waiting days in between is to monitor for any intolerances such as skin rashes, swelling, diarrhea, or vomiting. Consult your pediatrician if any of these occur.

What if my baby refuses and seems to dislike their first taste of solid food?

Babies quite often refuse their first servings of pureed foods because the taste and texture is new. If your baby refuses the feeding, do not force it. You can try again 1-2 weeks later. Research shows it can take up to 10 exposures of a new food for your infant to accept it. Try not to be a short order cook from the beginning.

What should I do about food allergies?

Postponing the introduction of highly allergenic foods, such as peanuts, eggs and fish, hasn't been shown to prevent eczema, asthma, allergic rhinitis and food allergies. In fact, early introduction of certain foods, such as peanuts and eggs, might in fact decrease the risk of allergy to that food. If your infant has severe eczema, speaking to a pediatric Allergist is recommended prior to introduction. Six months of age is a good time to introduce eggs soft or mushy in texture and peanuts either via peanut powder- PB2 powder mixed or Bamba or peanut butter watered down or mixed into food. If any close relatives have a food allergy, give your child his or her first taste of a highly allergenic food at home with an oral antihistamine available. If there's no reaction, the food can be introduced gradually.



Bowel Movements

Stool pattern can change greatly with introduction of solids. You may need to hold off on rice cereal or bananas for example if you notice difficulty passing a bowel movement or if you observe very hard stool.

Continued on the back.

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Try and make your own baby food

The thought of making baby food can feel overwhelming but it can be pretty simple. All it really takes is steaming or using the microwave then pureeing. Storage can be easy using 2 oz. or 4 oz. containers. It is important to ensure the texture is smooth and easy to tolerate.

The benefits of homemade baby food

Choosing to make baby food at home is less expensive than purchasing readymade baby food. One of the best parts is that it allows you to have control over the ingredients and flavors without added preservatives, salt or sugar, and you can avoid any foods that may cause allergic reactions. By making homemade baby food purees, you are able to introduce your infant to the unique foods and flavors frequently eaten by your family.

Safe Storage of Puréed and Solid Baby Food

Purees and Solids (opened or freshly made)	Refrigerator	Freezer
Strained fruits and vegetables	2 to 3 days	6 to 8 months
Strained meats and eggs	1 day	1 to 2 months
Meat/vegetable combinations	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
Homemade baby food	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months

Make meals enjoyable

- **Stay seated.** As soon as your baby can sit easily without support, use a highchair and buckle the safety straps.
- **Encourage exploration.** Your baby is likely to play with his or her food. Make sure that finger foods are soft, easy to swallow and broken down into small pieces.
- **Introducing utensils.** Offer your baby a spoon to hold while you feed with another spoon. As your baby's dexterity improves, encourage your baby to use a spoon.
- **Offer a cup.** Feeding your baby breast milk or formula from a cup at mealtimes can help pave the way for weaning from a bottle. Around age 9 months, your baby might be able to drink from a cup on their own.
- **Offer single servings.** If you feed your baby directly from a jar or container, saliva on the spoon can quickly spoil leftovers. Place servings in a separate dish.
- **Listen and observe baby's cues.** When your baby has had enough to eat, he or she might cry or turn away. Don't force extra bites. As long as your baby's growth is on target, he or she is likely getting enough to eat.

References: www.foodsafety.gov; www.cdc.org; www.eatright.org

