

Introducing Solid Foods to Infants

Your baby passes through several feeding stages in his first year:

- Nipple-feeding via breast or bottle: 0 – 12 months
- Introduction to solid foods
- Modified table food: 8 – 11 months

Look for developmental readiness to know when your baby is ready for starting solid foods.

Your goal is to teach your baby how to eat from a spoon, and to introduce new foods. Breast milk or infant formula still provides most of your baby's nutrition in the first year of life. Start one food at a time; wait 3-5 days before adding another new food, and observe for signs of allergic reaction (diarrhea, vomiting, wheezing, rash). If food is well tolerated, baby may continue to eat that food, and the next food may be introduced.

Readiness Cues	Suggested Intake	Suggested Foods
Roots for nipple Sucks	Breast-feeding or Bottle-feeding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8-12 feedings daily • 20-38 ounces 	Breast milk or Iron-fortified infant formula
Good head and neck control Sits up with minimal support Does not push food out of mouth with his tongue Opens mouth for spoon Shows interest in eating food	Breast-feeding or bottle-feeding Semi-solid pureed foods 1st stage= thick milk consistency 2nd stage=nectar consistency	Single grain baby cereal mixed with breast milk or formula (rice, brown rice, oatmeal, barley, quinoa, millet, kasha); pureed vegetables; pureed fruits; pureed meats
Chews up and down Moves food to sides of mouth Mashes lumps of food without difficulty	Thicker foods Strained or mashed foods Easily dissolvable solids	Mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams Well-cooked mashed vegetables Soft, diced fruits Chopped noodles, pasta Yogurt Pureed meats and legumes, egg yolk Easily dissolvable solids: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • puffs • mum-mums • butter-flavored crackers • graham crackers
Chews Moves food to jaws Closes lips around cup	Lumpy food Pieces of soft food Breast milk or formula from a cup Fruit juice from a cup	Cut-up cooked vegetables Diced soft/ripe fruits Chopped meats Casseroles Fruit juice
Picks up foods with fingers or palms Puts food in mouth Chews Wants to feed self	Finger foods Table foods	Pieces of soft, cooked foods Pieces of soft, ripe fruit Dry cereal, toast & crackers Cheese & eggs Casseroles, chopped Pieces of soft, moist meats, fish

Peanut butter, eggs, and fish should be introduced before 1 year of age.

Foods to be avoided:

- Avoid cow's milk and honey until your baby is 1 year of age.
- Avoid foods that may cause choking such as hotdogs, grapes, chips, hard candies, hard cookies, meat chunks.
- Foods should be chopped into small pieces (the size of a green pea).

How to Feed Your Baby Solids:

- Put your baby in the high chair, may need to be propped up with pillows for your baby to sit up straight.
- Sit right in front of your baby. Baby and Mom should be facing each other.
- Hold the spoon about 12 inches away from your baby's face.
- Wait for your baby to open his mouth.
- Feed as slowly, or as fast as he wants to eat.
- Let him touch his food.
- Talk to him, keep him company while he is eating.
- Don't be too entertaining, or distracting.
- Stop when he says he is done. Cues that your baby is done eating include: keeping mouth closed when spoonful of food is offered, turning head away from spoon.

What foods?

- Single grain cereal mixed with formula or breast milk to "thick milk" consistency.
- Grains to use include: rice, brown rice, oat, barley, quinoa, millet, kasha.
- 1st or 2nd stage baby fruits or pureed fruit.
- 1st or 2nd stage baby vegetables or pureed vegetables.
- 1st or 2nd stage baby meats or pureed meats (often tolerated best when mixed with pureed fruits or vegetables).

Food Texture

- First texture should be like "thin soup" or "thick milk" – similar to 1st stage baby foods.
- Progress, to 2nd stage baby food texture, or medium-thick soup-like texture, as tolerated.

How much do you feed?

Pay attention to your baby's cues. When your baby closes his mouth or turns away when the spoon approaches his mouth, those are cues that he is done eating.