

INFANT NUTRITION: STARTING SOLIDS

Ready to eat?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommend introducing solid foods around six months of age. Before this age, breast milk is best as it provides all the nutrition your baby requires. By six months, most breastfed babies need additional iron. Both formula and breastfed babies will benefit from exposure to more flavors and textures.

Baby is probably ready to eat solid foods when:

- ✓ Baby no longer has the reflex that causes her to push out with her tongue. Instead, baby can take food from a spoon and swallow.
- ✓ Baby can sit with support.
- ✓ Baby holds their head straight up when sitting.
- ✓ Baby can turn their head toward or away from food.
- ✓ Baby appears interested in food when other people are eating.
- ✓ Baby opens their mouth when offered a spoonful of food.

ALWAYS CHECK WITH YOUR PEDIATRICIAN, WHO KNOWS YOUR BABY BEST, BEFORE STARTING SOLIDS.

Baby serving sizes

All babies are different and the amount they eat at each meal may vary. Typically, a six month old will start with about 1 Tablespoon of each food per meal, and by the time they are 12 months will have gradually worked up to 1/4 cup (4 Tbsp) of each food on their plate. This means they may be eating a total of about 3/4 cup to 1 cup per meal.

Sometimes babies need to be exposed to a new food multiple times before they will eat it, so don't get discouraged if baby doesn't like a new food on first try.

Some babies take to solids right away, advancing textures and quantities quickly, while others take more time.

Either path is fine! Remember, eating solids at this age is mostly about letting your baby explore new flavors and textures and less about getting in calories. Breast milk and/or formula feedings continue to provide the bulk of baby's nutrients up to age one.

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These days there are few rules about how to introduce specific foods. It's all about making sure you are giving baby the right texture for their stage of development - a texture baby can swallow safely. Start with a single ingredient food and wait 2-3 days before adding a new food. It is important to introduce baby to a wide variety of foods, as starting solids is a key time to influence eating habits later in life.

The below guide provides some starting solids and advancing textures suggestions:

AGE & STAGE	GRAINS/CEREALS	FRUITS	VEGETABLES	PROTEIN FOODS	PORTION SIZES
6 MONTHS Start with pureed, strained, easy to swallow foods Add breastmilk, prepared formula or water for a thinner consistency	Iron fortified Infant cereals Pureed barley, oatmeal, amaranth, quinoa cereal	Cooked, pureed single fruits such as peaches, apples, pears, apricots, etc. Mashed raw banana or avocado	Cooked, pureed single vegetable such as carrots, peas, green beans, squash, sweet potato, etc	Pureed meats, fish, poultry, legumes, tofu Whole milk yogurt, no added sugar Soft scrambled eggs, mashed slightly Peanut or nut butter, thinned	Start with 1-2 Tbsp one to two times per day Work up to 2 to 4 Tbsp 2 to 3 times per day
7-9 MONTHS Progress texture to lumpy/ coarsely mashed or finely chopped foods Begin exploring self-feeding with soft 'smushable' finger foods	Lumpier oatmeal, iron fortified cereals Dry 'O' type cereal Bits of soft whole grain bread Soft cooked pasta	Peeled mashed cooked fruits Continue to increase the variety Start to mix foods baby has tried	Peeled mashed cooked veggies Continue to increase the variety Start to mix foods baby has tried	Soft mashed meats, fish, legumes, tofu Whole milk yogurt, no added sugar Soft scrambled egg Cottage cheese or other pasteurized soft cheeses Peanut or nut butter, thinned	2 to 3 small meals, about the size of baby's fist Begin teaching baby how to drink water from a cup. No more than a couple oz per day
8-12 MONTHS When ready, add more soft finger foods Baby can join family meals Begin introducing table foods / combination foods with 'smush' consistency	Whole grain no-added sugar cereal, puffs, pasta, brown rice, quinoa, whole grain tortilla	Small pieces of cooked or soft fruit, skins removed	Small pieces of cooked or soft veggies, skins removed	Small pieces of soft cooked meats, fish, tofu, legumes, egg and soft pasteurized cheese Whole milk yogurt, no added sugar Peanut or nut butter on soft toast	3 to 4 small meals plus nutritious snacks

Some foods to avoid that could be a choking hazard: chunks of meat or cheese, hot dogs, sausages, popcorn, seeds, nuts, chunks of peanut butter, whole grapes or cherry tomatoes, hard gooey or sticky candy, chewing gum, raw vegetables or fruit chunks. No need to add salt or sugar to baby's foods.

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