

### When to Start Solid Foods

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends waiting to introduce solid foods until at least 4 months of age, exclusive breastfeeding for the first 4 to 6 months of age, continued breastfeeding to the first birthday and beyond if possible, and the use of infant formula for the first year of life for those infants who are not breastfed. Regardless of your baby's age, you never want to start your baby on solid foods before she is ready.

### Is Your Baby Ready for Solid Foods?

- Has he doubled his birth weight?
- Does she consume more than thirty-two fluid ounces of formula or breastmilk a day?
- Does he sit up without support?
- Does she watch with interest as you eat or open her mouth as if to ask for a bite?

### Introducing Solids

When introducing solids, it is important to start slowly. Your baby's first solid food should be rice cereal because it is easy to digest and is unlikely to cause an allergic reaction. Mix the cereal according to the package directions. It should be only slightly thicker than milk. Let your baby explore the cereal with her hands first. When she is ready, offer her a spoonful. During the first few feedings, your baby will probably only eat a bite or two. Most of it will come right back out because of her immature swallowing coordination. As your baby gets used to cereal, you can start to introduce individual vegetables and fruits. When feeding, offer vegetables first, because babies have a natural "sweet tooth." If a food is rejected, wait and try again. Continual exposure will help your baby become a less particular eater. Rotating foods helps to avoid boredom. Encourage self-feeding and make mealtime a fun time for you and your baby.

### New Foods

It is recommended that new foods be introduced at home, rather than at a restaurant or child care setting, as a single ingredient, and for a several day trial to see if it is well tolerated. Food can be introduced this way every 3 to 5 days as appropriate for the infant's developmental readiness. This slow, one at a time, process gives parents or caregivers a chance to identify and eliminate any food that causes an allergic reaction.

Egg, dairy, peanut, tree nuts, fish and shellfish can be gradually introduced during the same four to six month window after less allergenic foods have been tolerated. In fact, delaying the introduction of these foods may increase your baby's risk of developing allergies.

### Foods to Avoid

For the first year, it is important to avoid feeding certain foods.

#### **These foods include:**

- Cow's milk - Cow's milk also doesn't have all the nutrients a baby needs during his or her first year, which is why breastmilk or formula are the best milk sources.

- Fruit juice - Fruit juice contains calories but none of the fat, protein, calcium, zinc, vitamin D or fiber that babies need. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that fruit juice not be given at all to babies younger than a year old.
- Honey - It is important to avoid honey, because it may contain bacteria that cause botulism, which can be deadly. The amounts of these bacteria in honey are very, very small and it doesn't affect older children and adults. But, it can be enough to make newborns and small babies very sick or even cause death

You may have heard that you should avoid feeding babies allergenic foods — including peanuts, eggs, wheat, citrus fruits, tomatoes and strawberries — during the first year. But the AAP now recommends introducing allergenic foods early, between 4 and 11 months, to prevent food allergies.

**The following foods are choking hazards and should be avoided:**

- Popcorn kernels
- Hard candy
- Raw apples
- Unripe pears
- Meat chunks
- Hot dogs, whole or chunks
- Undercooked or raw carrots
- Unpeeled grapes
- Stringy foods

NUTRITIONAL GUIDE FOR BABIES UNDER THE AGE OF TWELVE MONTHS				
Age	Cereal & Breads	Vegetables	Fruits & Juices	Protein
<b>0-4 months</b>	» Breast milk or formula			
<b>4-6 months</b>	» *See When To Start	» *See Introducing Solids	» *See Introducing Solids	» *See Introducing Solids
<b>6-8 months</b>	» Single-grain baby cereals (w/ iron) » Baby cereal/fruit » Oven-dried toast » Teething biscuits	» Strained or mashed green, dark yellow, or orange (1/4 to 1/2 cup per day)	» Strained or mashed w/o peels (up to 1/2 cup per day)	» * See New Foods
<b>8-10 months</b>	» Toast » Plain bagels » Crackers » Bread	» Mashed vegetables	» Soft fresh fruit, peeled » Canned fruits packed in water	» Ground or finely chopped lean meats » Egg yolks » Plain yogurt » Cottage cheese » Cheese
<b>10-12 months</b>	» Unsweetened cereals » Mashed potatoes » Rice » Noodles » Spaghetti	» Cooked vegetables	» Soft fresh fruit, peeled » Canned fruits packed in water	» Tender, small pieces of meat » Cooked beans

## Year Two: Toddler-Sized Portions

Your child's interest in food seems to decrease around his first birthday. Toddlers are exploring a new and stimulating world, and sometimes play is more interesting than eating. Expecting a toddler to eat three square meals a day is unrealistic. Relax. Trying to feed an uninterested toddler can lead to feeding problems. Try instead to provide balanced nutrition over the space of a day instead of at every meal. Here are some examples of what a typical toddler needs in a day:

### **Milk: 4 servings**

1/2 cup of whole milk  
1/3 cup of full-fat yogurt  
1 1/2 ounces of cheese

### **Grains: 6 servings**

1/2 slice of bread  
1/4 cup of rice or pasta  
1/4 cup of cereal

### ***PLUS 2 servings from the following groups:***

#### **Fruits**

1/4 cup fresh  
2 tbsp pureed  
3 ounces of juice

#### **Vegetables**

2 tbsp well-cooked or  
pureed

#### **Protein**

1 cooked egg  
2 tbsp meat  
2 tbsp beans

## Weaning from the Bottle

There really is no rush. Bottles bother adults more than toddlers. If your toddler is a picky eater and not yet skilled in drinking from a cup, allow daytime bottles of milk or formula (up to thirty-two ounces a day) to ensure enough nutrition. When he is consistently eating a balanced diet of solid foods, gradually wean him from the bottle to a cup. Feeding time is an important time for bonding. It is a special time for closeness. By what you feed and how you feed your child, you are helping her develop eating habits for a lifetime. Providing your baby with the best possible nutritional foundation is one of the most important and loving gifts you can give.

#### Resources include:

1. Fleischer DM. Early introduction of allergenic foods may prevent food allergy in children. *American Academy of Pediatrics News*, 34. 2013 Feb;2.
2. Greer FR, Sicherer SH, Burks AW. The Effects of Early Nutritional Interventions on the Development of Atopic Disease in Infants and Children: The Role of Maternal Dietary Restriction, Breastfeeding, Hydrolyzed Formulas, and Timing of Introduction of Allergenic Complementary Foods. *Pediatrics*. 2019 Apr 1;143(4):e20190281.
3. American Academy of Pediatrics. HALF Implementation Guide. Age Specific Content. Infant Food and Feeding. Found at <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/HALF-Implementation-Guide/Age-Specific-Content/Pages/Infant-Food-and-Feeding.aspx>, accessed 12/10/2019.