

# Feeding Infants: Introducing Solids

Food Sense



When will MY baby be ready?



**12-18 months**

→ Toddlers eat the same food as other family members, but in smaller portions.



**9-12 months**

→ Babies can eat mashed or diced table food along with the family.

**6-9 months**

- Introduce strained meat and poultry along with yogurt and cottage cheese.
- Offer thicker food with more texture
- Offer finger foods

**4-6 months**

- Begin with iron-fortified baby rice cereal mixed with breast milk or formula
- Add finely pureed vegetables and fruit

Not every baby is ready at the same time. There are other signs that your baby will use to tell you he/she is ready for solids.

There is some special equipment you will need to feed your baby solids.

- Small spoon with rubber tip
- Small plastic bowl
- Cup with a spout
- Bib
- Protection for floor and furniture
- Blender
- Food processor
- Food grinder



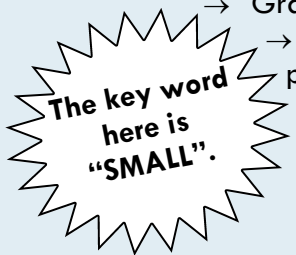
- Doubled birth weight
- At least four months old
- Not satisfied with just breast milk or formula
- Wants to eat more frequently
- Keeps a puree in his/her mouth
- Sits up and holds his/her head up
- Drools when hungry
- Takes an interest in what you are eating
- Opens mouth when a spoon approaches

Finger foods are delicious! Try these items for your solid-eating baby:

- Dry, unsweetened cereal
- Crisp crackers, graham crackers or pieces of toast
- Small chunks of soft or cooked fruit
- Small pieces of cooked vegetables
- Grated cheese
- Small cubes of cooked meat or poultry
- Small pieces of cooked pasta

Some babies have food allergies. To detect them, introduce new foods one at a time. Watch for these symptoms:

- Stomachache
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Skin rash
- Wheezing
- Swollen lips, eyelids, hands, or feet.



## Safety tips

- Always stay with your baby when he/she eats.
- Make sure your baby sits up to eat.
- Cut food pieces to less than 1/4 inch.
- Do not feed your baby honey.
- Stir baby food well to avoid hot spots.
- Avoid baby bottle tooth decay! Do not give you baby juice in a bottle; always use a cup. Tooth decay can also be a problem when a baby goes to bed drinking a bottle filled with formula, milk, or a sweetened drink.

Be aware that there are many **choking hazards** for your young baby as he/she is learning to eat solids. Avoid feeding them the following:

- Hard candy
- Chips
- Olives
- Popcorn
- Nuts
- Hot dogs
- Hard vegetables
- Grapes
- Cherries
- Raisins

## Cows' Milk

Your baby should consume breast milk or formula until he/she is twelve months old. Pediatricians recommend babies between the age of one to two years drink pasteurized whole milk.

Babies are generally weaned by the end of their first year. As your baby learns to drink milk from a cup, gradually discontinue breast or bottle feedings.

## Feeding tips

- Hold your baby the first few times you feed him/her solid food
- Be relaxed, loving, flexible and patient
- Let your baby set the pace
- Let your baby's appetite determine the amount
- Eliminate distractions
- Keep your baby safe while eating
- Do not get upset over a mess
- Do not use food as a reward, pacifier, or punishment
- Feeding is still an important bonding time
- Remember, this is a new experience for your baby and he/she needs time to learn new skills and adjust to eating a variety of food

## MAKE YOUR OWN BABY FOOD!

It is less expensive and gives you control over the ingredients. If you use healthy cooking methods, are careful about cleanliness and do not add salt, sugar, butter or margarine, your homemade baby food will be a healthy choice.

Baby food can be prepared in large batches and frozen in ice cube trays. To store, place the frozen cubes into a freezer bag and label with ingredients and date. One cube is usually enough for a younger baby. As he/she grows and begins to eat more, serve two or three at a time.

Purees of vegetables and fruits last 2 to 3 days in the fridge and 3 to 4 months in the freezer. Meat lasts 1 day in the fridge and 1 to 2 months in the freezer.

To defrost the frozen cubes, place them in a covered container in the fridge for about 8 hours or use a microwave. Food can be heated in a small pan on the stove, a warming dish, or the microwave.

## RECIPES

### Meat or poultry

1/2 lb. meat or poultry  
1/4-1/2 cup breast milk or formula

Remove fat and skin from meat or poultry. Cut into 1/2 inch cubes. Cook in a small amount of water until tender. Place meat cubes in a blender, food processor or food grinder; puree. Thin with breast milk or formula. Serve or freeze.

### Fruit

1 cup ripe fruit or canned fruit (in its own juice)  
2-3 Tablespoons juice or water

Remove skin and seeds from fresh fruit. Place fruit in a blender, food processor or food grinder; puree. Thin mixture as needed with juice or water. Serve or freeze.

### Vegetables

1 cup fresh, frozen or canned vegetables (without salt)  
1/4 to 1/2 cup breast milk, formula, or cooking liquid

Cook fresh or frozen vegetables in a small amount of water until tender. Heat canned vegetables. Place vegetable chunks in a blender, food processor or food grinder; puree. Thin mixture as needed with breast milk, formula, or cooking liquid. Serve or freeze.