

STARTING SOLID FOODS

Starting around 6 months of age, watch for signs that your baby may be ready to start solid foods. These signs can include that your baby...

- can hold up his or her head
- can sit in a feeding chair with some support
- seems interested in what you are eating, such as trying to grab food off of your plate
- can move food from a spoon into his or her throat
- makes chewing and biting movements



What should I feed my baby? 6-9 months

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends starting with the following:

- Iron fortified cereal - start with rice cereal and then try oat or barley cereal. Wait until your baby is older before you introduce wheat cereal.
- Single-ingredient meats (pureed), such as chicken or beef

Then begin offering other single-ingredient foods:

- Vegetables (pureed) - try cooked and pureed green beans, carrots, and squash.
- Fruits (pureed) - try cooked peaches, pears, apples, and mashed bananas.
- Protein rich foods such as other meats, egg yolk, and legumes.

What should I feed my baby? 9-12 months

- When your baby is 9 months of age you can begin offering your baby finely chopped or mashed food mixtures. At this age, your child can also begin feeding himself or herself by trying finger foods.
- Finger foods should be small enough for babies to pick up and soft enough for them to chew on.
- Appropriate finger foods include the following: cooked macaroni or noodles; small pieces of bread; small pieces of soft, ripe peeled fruit; soft cooked vegetables; and small pieces of cheese.

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How should I feed my baby?

- When starting solid foods, you can thin them with a little breast milk or formula.
- Start with one new food at a time. Wait 3 to 4 days before trying another new food. This allows you to watch for signs of an allergic reaction such as a rash, wheezing, or diarrhea after feeding a new food. If your baby has an allergic reaction, stop feeding that food and check with your pediatrician.
- You can make your own pureed baby food in a baby food grinder, blender, or food processor - it is easy and saves money.
- Help your baby like the real taste of food. There is no need to add any salt, sugar, or butter.
- Remember to look for signs your baby is full. Babies do not need to finish all their food.
- Start with small amounts and then provide more if your baby is still hungry. This helps avoid waste while honoring your baby's hunger and fullness cues.
- Give your child time and chances to learn to like new food. It may take up to 10-15 exposures to a new food before your baby accepts it - so keep trying!



What should my baby drink?

- Babies should continue to drink breast milk or formula until they are 12 months old.
- Small amounts of water.
- It is best not to give your baby juice until after he or she is 12 months old; however, recommendations do allow for 4-6 ounces of 100% juice starting at 6 months of age. There is a lot of sugar in juice. Too much sugar can make babies gain too much weight and can be bad for their developing teeth. If you do give juice, give it in a sippy cup - never in a bottle!

Wait until your baby is 12 months old to give:

- Cow's milk - Cow's milk does not provide the proper nutrients for your baby.
- Honey - Avoid honey in any form in your child's first year.