

Feeding Your Baby Solid Foods

Babies should be fed only breastmilk or formula until about 6 months of age. Solid foods can then be started when your baby is ready. A baby is ready to eat from a spoon when he or she can maintain a sitting position while supported low at the hips, keep his or her tongue in the mouth and watch or act like they want to eat with others. If you question whether your baby is ready to start solid foods, please ask your pediatrician or dietitian.

You will need

- small cup or bowl
- small baby spoon or plastic spoon
- bibs
- wet cloth or towel to wipe up spills

How to feed your baby

1. Put the amount of solid food you plan to give into a bowl. Do not feed baby right from the jar because this may cause the remaining food to spoil faster. Cover the jar, place it in the refrigerator and use it within 2 days.
2. A high chair or feeding chair should be used when you feed your baby. Always secure baby safely in the high chair using the seat strap. Never leave your baby alone in the high chair.
3. Put a small amount of food on the tip of the spoon. Let your baby taste it. If he spits it out, place the food midway back on his tongue and let him swallow it. Have patience and let him **learn** how to swallow. Feed him slowly, allowing plenty of time to swallow the food. Remember, feeding will take time and be messy for a while.
4. **Never, ever, force your baby to eat.** If baby is finished, stop offering food and try again at the next meal. It may take 10 to 20 tries before a food is accepted.
5. Throw away any leftover food in the bowl after your baby is finished eating. Your baby may be finished eating if he does the following:
 - becomes distracted when eating
 - cries
 - turns his head or closes his mouth
 - spits out food

What to feed your baby

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 months old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby's first solid food can be vegetables, meat, fruit or cereal. These foods should be strained, mashed or finely minced. Each new food should be started one at a time. Whatever food you decide to offer first should not be mixed with anything. Wait 3 to 5 days before starting the next new food. If you use a dry baby cereal, moisten the cereal with a small amount of expressed breastmilk or formula. The cereal should be about as thick as strained baby food.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 to 9 months old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Finger Foods" may be given. These are solid foods that can melt in your baby's mouth, such as Gerber Puffs, cereals such as Cheerios, graham crackers, soft pasta, soft breakfast bars, shredded cheese, small pieces or shredded pieces of meat, home-cooked or canned vegetables, tofu, hummus, and canned fruits.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 to 12 months old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most foods are allowed and should be cut into teaspoon-sized pieces.

Safety tips

- Always supervise your baby's meals.
- Avoid foods that may cause choking.** In general, foods that may cause choking are smooth, round foods. Avoid pieces of hot dog, hard candies, nuts, seeds, grapes, popcorn, peanuts, raw carrots or pretzels.
 - Your baby may be choking if:** he cannot cough or cry; has a blue or purple face; grabs at the throat; has a weak cough, labored breathing, or loss of consciousness.
- Babies under 1 year of age should not be fed honey or foods that contain honey.** Honey is not sterile. It may contain harmful bacteria that can cause illness in children younger than 1 year.
- Make sure the lids on jars of food are sealed tightly when you buy them.** Do not buy the food if the seal is broken (if you press the top of the lid and it springs back, it means the seal is broken). Before opening the jar, wipe the jar and lid with a clean, damp cloth to remove dust.

Continued on page 3

Safety tips, continued

- **Do not heat food in a microwave.**
- **All baby foods should be given with a spoon** and not through a bottle, unless directed by your baby's therapist or doctor.

Food allergies and food intolerance

When you add new foods to an infant's diet, food allergies or food intolerances sometimes develop. Some common symptoms of food allergies are:

- Skin rashes
- Severe vomiting after eating
- Hives like a skin rash (welts)
- Diarrhea

If your baby has any of the above symptoms, call your doctor for advice.

When you give new foods, give only one new food at a time. Then, wait 3 to 5 days before adding another new food.

- Other foods that baby has eaten before can also be given during this time.
- Try all plain foods before giving your baby mixed foods.
- You can use the record below to keep a list of new foods and the date they were given. If a food allergy occurs, it will be easier for the doctor to know which food caused the allergy.

It may help to prevent food allergies in infants if you introduce eggs and age-appropriate foods that contain peanuts between 8 and 11 months of age. Try mixing 2 teaspoons of smooth peanut butter with hot water until it is a puree. Offer a small amount of this with close supervision.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your baby's doctor, nurse, or dietitian.

The **New Food Record** for your baby is on Page 4.

[illegible]