



Introducing Solid Foods: Bayside Guidelines

Many opinions on introducing solid foods have dramatically changed in light of recent research. The following are our guidelines which may be very different than anything else you've read. The goal is to provide adequate nutrition for optimal growth while having fun in a safe manner. Check with us about specific questions as each baby is different and may have special needs.

When Do I Start Solids?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends between the ages of 4-6 months
- The World Health Organization recommends at 6 months
- Evidence shows that starting solids before 4 months and after 6 months may increase the chance of food allergies and diabetes. This means the ideal time is between 4 and 6 months.

Look for cues from your infant:

- Is the baby interested in what you're eating?
- Can she hold her head up steady?
- Can he sit with some assistance?

Here are some guidelines:

- Always feed solids with a spoon and while your child is seated—this prevents choking.
- It's going to be messy. Don't fret! That's part of the pleasure.
- Try giving the baby his own spoon, the so-called "2 spoon technique."

A Few Words on Allergies

- Food allergies present as difficulty breathing, rash, vomiting, severe diarrhea, even blood in the stool.
- Recent studies show that it is better to feed allergenic foods early rather than later. Yes, you heard that right! Unless you know your child is allergic to them

already, make sure that you feed him or her fish, shellfish, egg whites, cow's milk, peanut butter, strawberries, etc. before they are 9 months old. But make sure that it is in a non-chokeable form—for example, not whole nuts or a large glob of peanut butter (you can spread nut butters on toast for older babies or make a peanut sauce for younger children).

- We generally recommend waiting 3-5 days between introducing each new food, so that if there is a reaction or allergy to something, it will be easier to tell which food caused the problem. However, if you don't have a family history of food allergies and your child doesn't have eczema or other signs of allergies, it may not be necessary to give each new food on its own for 3-5 days.
- If you see signs of possible allergy, write down the foods you gave in the past day and give us a call. We'll probably recommend avoiding those foods for a few weeks and then reintroducing them one by one to identify the food that caused the allergy. If it was a severe reaction, we may do testing first.

Which Food Do I Start With?

- You can start with almost anything—meat, cereal, vegetables, fruit, yogurt, lentils, homemade chicken soup with garlic and onions—it just needs to be pureed to a liquid consistency (as babies get older you can make it thicker and even chunky). Try to avoid salt, but you can use healthy oils (like olive oil).
- What babies most need is iron and zinc—which is in meat and beans. Many show a preference for the yellow veggies, probably because they need more beta-carotene for their eyes. One recent study suggests it may be important to introduce gluten early (in wheat and barley) to avoid reactions to it.

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Here are some guidelines:

- In case the baby does not finish the serving, don't feed directly from the jar.
- Instead, put a single serving (2 oz. or ice cube sized) in a bowl.
- Once a spoon enters the baby's mouth, it picks up bacteria which you don't want to introduce into the jar because it will make the food spoil faster.

Which foods should be avoided?

- Avoid honey (even as a sweetener) until after 1 year of age.
- Cow's milk should not replace formula until the 1st birthday (but it is okay to have yogurt, cheese, or milk cooked in things).
- Avoid deli meats and hot dogs that contain nitrites, which can be carcinogenic.
- *Avoid choking hazard foods:* nuts, seeds, hot dogs, popcorn, peanut butter, hard/raw vegetables, hard candy, grapes, hard fruits like apple chunks

How much should my baby be eating?

- Gradually increase solid foods over the next couple of months.
 - Generally a baby is eating solids 1 time a day at ages 4-6 months
 - Most 7-8 month olds eat solids 2 times a day
 - Most 9 month olds eat solids 2-3 times a day
 - Most 1 year olds eat solids 5 times a day
- Some babies eat more or less than this—check with us to confirm that your baby is gaining weight appropriately.
- Usually the introduction of solids does not decrease the amount of milk the baby drinks until about 8-9 months.
- When your baby has had enough, she will turn away from the spoon, close her mouth or lean back. Feed her until she's full but *don't force the extra bites.*

Between 7-9 months, introduce new textures:

These foods are less pureed (stages 2 and 3). By 9 months, the pincer grasp (thumb-first finger pinch) is developed, which makes picking up finger foods much easier. Examples of finger foods might be shredded chicken, baked sweet potatoes, soft meatballs, black beans, bananas, sautéed spinach, toast with peanut butter (soft bread can become a choking hazard if it balls up).

Between 10-12 months, add more table foods:

The amount of formula or breast milk should be decreasing as the amount of solids increases, so that the majority of nutrition comes from solid foods.

At 1 year:

- Change over to regular cow's milk (whole milk)—16-20 oz. per day is enough.
- We also recommend a daily vitamin supplement for your child, since even this amount of milk doesn't have the recommended amount of vitamin D. If your baby doesn't like milk, talk to us about other ways to get calcium too.
- They usually eat 5 small meals a day
- Implementing healthy eating habits at this age will benefit your child for the rest of his life.



Water

- Once solids are under way, it's a good idea to start a small amount of water. Don't worry about the quantity; let your baby decide how much to drink.
- Introduce water in a cup.
- Fluoridated water is important for the teeth. Most filters (Brita) will not remove the fluoride from tap water.

Juice

- Avoid juice if you can, or at least limit the amount of juice to less than 4 oz./day and dilute it.
- There is limited nutritional value in juice—it's best to get the nutrients and vitamins from the fruit itself.