



bristol
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associates

Is your baby ready to start solid foods?

Typically, babies are ready for solid foods when they double their birth weight, which is usually around 4-6 months old. The AAP recommends delaying starting solids until 6 months old. Also, look for developmental signs that he is ready for solid food:

- Can he hold his head up?
- Does he have interest in food – opens his mouth when food comes his way? Reach for your food?
- Can he move food from a spoon? If you open a spoonful of cereal, and he pushes it out of this mouth, he may not have the ability to swallow it yet. That's ok. Remember he hasn't had anything thicker than breastmilk or formula before. It takes practice. You may want to wait a week or two and try again.

Tips for starting foods

- Keep it simple.
 - You want to start with single ingredient foods. Foods that are made for babies. If you want to make your own food, puree simple fruits and vegetables and mix with formula or breastmilk.
- Doesn't matter what are the first foods.
 - Traditionally, single grain cereals are introduced first. This is because its easy to mix with formula and breastmilk and offer from a spoon. It's simple and gentle on their stomach. But there is no medical evidence that you must introduce solid foods in a certain order.
- Introduce one new food at a time.
 - When starting a new food, wait 4 days before offering a new food. This allows you to watch for any reactions or allergies to the new food.
- Start small.
 - Start with small amounts of foods. A tablespoon of cereal mixed with formula and breastmilk is the best way to start. Unless guided by your pediatrician, do not add cereal to the bottle. Feed it to them from a spoon.
- Look for cues they are done.
 - If baby is crying, pushing lips together, turning head away, then they are finished. Continue the feeding with breastmilk or formula. Remember, learning to eat solid foods is a gradual process. They are complimentary and most of their nutrition comes from breastmilk and formula.

When can my baby try new foods?

Once they have learned to eat one food, gradually add in additional foods. Give one new food at a time. There is no evidence that waiting to introduce baby-safe (soft), allergy-causing foods like eggs, dairy, peanut, or fish beyond the 4-6-month age prevents allergy. If you believe your baby has an allergic reaction (like diarrhea, rash, or vomiting), stop feeding them this food and talk your pediatrician about this. Unless your child has a history of severe eczema, it is ok to feed your baby peanut butter after you have introduced other complimentary foods. Try even mixing it with bananas or apples!

Within a few months of starting solid foods, your baby's diet should be a variety of foods like breast milk, formula, cereals, vegetables, fruits, even eggs and fish.

Initially around 6 months old you will feed your baby just once a day and gradually increase to twice a day. A good goal is about 2-4 tablespoons at each meal. Around a year old they have more structured breakfast, lunch, dinner schedule and portions are about the size of baby's fist.

When can you start finger foods?

Once baby is sitting up, putting objects to mouth, you can introduce soft foods. Foods that are easy to swallow and chew without teeth are the best. Some ideas include bananas, scrambled eggs, well-cooked pasta, finely chopped chicken, steamed vegetables

Here is a sample menu for an 8-12 months old

Breakfast:

1/4 – 1/2 cup of cereal or mashed egg

1/4 - 1/2 cup of fruit (like bananas or cooked apples)

4-6 ounces of formula/breastmilk

Snack

4-6 ounces of breastmilk/formula

1/4 cup of diced cheese or cooked vegetables (like broccoli or cooked squash)

Lunch

1/4-1/2 cup of yogurt or meat like ground chicken or slices of meat

1/4-1/2 cup of vegetables (like steamed carrots or peas)

4-6 ounces of breastmilk

Snack

Crackers or Toast

1/4 cup of fruit or diced avocado

Water

Dinner

1/4 cup of meat

1/4- 1/2 cup of vegetables

1/4 cup of grains like pasta or rice

1/4 cup of fruit (like peaches or blueberries)

4-6 ounces of breastmilk/formula

Before bedtime

6-8 ounces of formula/breastmilk

What should my baby NOT have?

- Honey. No Honey until after 1 year of age. It can cause infant botulism
- Cow's milk. No cow's milk until 1 year of age. It is ok to introduce other cow's milk things like cheese and yogurt.
- Nuts, Popcorn, Whole Grapes: These are choking hazards. You can cut the grapes, but avoid the others all together.

When to start a sippy cup?

When baby is feeding himself, it is time to introduce drinking from a cup. In the beginning fill the cup with water or breastmilk/formula and offer it at one meal a day. Usually babies are ready around 8-9 months old. Remember, water and formula/breastmilk only until one year of age. After a year of age, it is time to introduce whole milk. Babies don't need any juice.

Start healthy habits young

Encourage family meals from the first feeding. When possible, the whole family should sit down for a meal together. Having dinner together, as a family, on regular basis has a positive effect on the development of children. Remember to offer a good variety of healthy foods. Watch for cues of when they are finished and encourage good portions early. At a year of age, babies should be eating all solid table foods and work on feeding them what you are eating!

Here is a sample menu for a One-Year Old

Breakfast:

½ cup of cereal or eggs

¼ - ½ cup of fruit (sliced banana or strawberries)

can be added to cereal or separate

¼ - ½ cup of whole milk

Snack

Whole wheat muffin or toast,
or yogurt with cut up fruit

Lunch

½ sandwich with sliced turkey, chicken, or
peanut butter

½ cup of whole milk

½ cup of cooked vegetables (peas or broccoli)

Snack

1-2 ounces of cheese, cubed or string cheese

2-3 tablespoons of fruit

Water

Dinner

2-3 ounces of cooked meat, ground or diced
chicken, beef, or fish

½ cup of vegetables (squash or carrots)

½ cup of pasta or a potato

Water