

# INTRODUCING YOUR BABY TO SOLID FOODS

## COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARENTS:



### *When should I start introducing my baby to solid foods?*

A young infant's menu of breast milk or infant formula during the first few months of life is a basic and healthy one. The American Academy of Pediatric's Committee on Nutrition advises that supplemental foods not be introduced before four to six months. Offering solid foods any earlier will not make a baby sleep through the night or give up nightly fussing, and it may cause an allergic reaction or digestive upsets. The most logical time to begin introducing solid foods is when your baby shows he is ready for them.



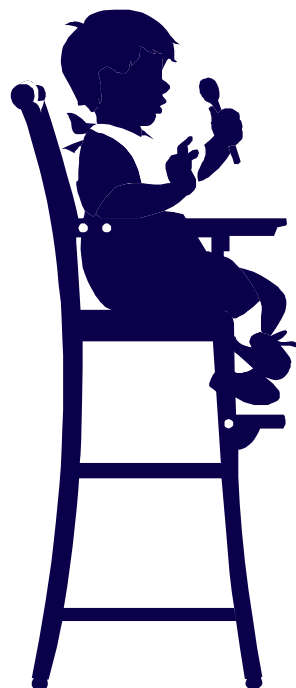
### *How will I know if my baby is ready to start?*

- doubled birth weight
- consumes 32 oz of breast milk or formula every day
- sits up with little support and turns head when full
- your baby's tongue doesn't keep pushing food out
- close her lips over a spoon
- putting things in her mouth



### *How do I start?*

1. Start with rice cereal for a few weeks. To mix baby's first cereal, use one teaspoon dry cereal with two tablespoons of breast milk, formula or water. The mixture should be very thin. As your baby is able to accept more food mix dual parts of liquid to dry cereal. Do not use raw or pasteurized cow's milk to mix cereal. Cow's milk is difficult for a baby's system to digest until after one year of age.
2. After cereals have been established you can introduce either fruits or vegetables and meats to be introduced last.
3. Introduce foods slowly. Let your baby try each new food (one- three tablespoons worth) for a few days before introducing another.
4. Use a baby spoon and place a small amount (about 1/2tsp) of food on the baby's tongue.
5. Observe for any signs of reaction: Diarrhea, irritability, runny nose, coughing or wheezing, or a rash, especially around the face. If a reaction has occurred, withdraw the food, wait for the problem to calm down, and try again -- unless severe call your provider.
6. Once your baby is taking food from different groups, you can feed her solids twice daily and expand to three times daily when three or more types of food are part of her daily routine. In addition, her daily intake should include about 16-32 oz of breast milk or formula.
7. Once she has become well acquainted with solids, for most feedings you would probably want to offer breast milk or formula after your baby has had other foods. You do not want to fill her up before giving her solids.





### ***How much food is enough?***

1. Your baby is eating well if she shows signs of steady weight gain. Your baby should be gaining an average of 1/2 a pound a month from 6 months on. This is about 4-6 pounds a year.
2. At age 8 – 12 months your baby needs between 750 and 900 calories each day, about 400 to 500 of which should come from breast milk or formula ( about 24 oz a day).



### **When to introduce finger foods:**

1. At about 8 months you may want to introduce finger foods. Finger foods for babies include crunchy toast, well-cooked pasta, small pieces of chicken, scrambled egg, cereals and chunks of banana.
2. Because she's likely to swallow without chewing, never offer a young child spoonfuls of peanut butter, large pieces of raw carrot, nuts, grapes, popcorn, uncooked peas, celery, hard candies, or other hard round foods.



### ***Important Facts to Remember:***

- Use a small spoon and feed from a dish.
- Begin with single-ingredient foods (such as rice cereal)
- Introduce one new food at a time. Wait a few days between new foods.
- Feed the baby when she is hungry, but do not overfeed.
- Make meal time fun and smile when you feed your baby.
- Respect baby's signals for being full
- Do not add salt, sugar or other seasonings to food.
- Always refrigerate an opened jar of food immediately
- Throw away food that is left in the refrigerator more than three days.
- Never leave the baby unattended during meal time
- Breast milk or formula is still the main source of nutrition during the first year.
- Cut table foods into small pieces before feeding to prevent choking.

If you would like more information about infant feeding and nutrition visit [www.verybestbaby.com](http://www.verybestbaby.com). You'll find topics related to infant and mom's nutrition, and baby's well being. This website also provides a solid food Feeding guide. This guide will help you see at a glance when and how much solid food and cereals to introduce.

### Resources

Stevne P. Shelov, MD (1998). The American Academy Of Pediatrics: The Complete and Authoritative guide Caring for Your Baby and Young Child Birth to Age 5. New York, NY: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Paul C. Reisser, M.D. (1997). Focus On the Family: The First 2 Years. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

