Maple Kidz Clinic

Guide to starting solid foods

When is my baby ready to start solid foods?

Babies show that they are ready for solid foods at **4 - 6 months of age**, and when they can:

- **Sit up** with little help
- Have good **head and neck control**
- Open mouth & **be excited** when food offered

My baby is **hungry** when they:

- Lean forward or reach for foods
- Sucks or smacks lips
- Offers mouth when food offered
- Puts fist in mouth

My baby is **full** when they:

- Turn away from food
- Close mouth when food is offered
- Covers mouth with hands
- Fusses or cries

As a parent, I should be:

- Choosing **what** foods to offer
- Choosing **when** and **where** the baby is fed

How should I start solid foods?

- **Give baby 1 new food at a time**: this makes it easier to identify if the baby is allergic to the food. Feed a new food daily for three consecutive days before adding the next new food.
- **Start with small amounts**: start with a single teaspoon 1-2 times per day, then move up over the upcoming month to 1-2 tablespoons per day.
- **Follow baby's cues**: wait for baby's mouth to open when you offer food. Feed as slowly or quickly as baby wants. Stop feeding when baby shows signs of fullness. Never force baby to feed.
- **Start by offering solid foods once a day**: some babies will be ready to eat more than once a day.
- **Try new foods and flavours:** some babies are cautious eaters and need time to trust.

Last updated: 2021-02-04
Adapted from: Alberta Health Services Nutrition Guide, Last edited by: Krish Bilimoria

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What kinds of solid foods should I try?

- Cereal: iron-fortified- oat, rice, wheat, barley- mixed with breastmilk, formula, or water
- Cottage cheese, yogurt, meats, seafood, egg (yolk and white together), lentils, tofu, soy, wheat, peanut butter, tree nut butters, cooked vegetables.

Foods to avoid!

Choking risks (under 4 years of age)
Bread, raw vegetables, crackers, hard candy, grapes, chicken on bone, nuts, gum, cheese chunks, apple, marshmallows, popcorn

Honey (under 1 year of age)
Honey may have **botulinum** toxin, which can be a **deadly** infection in babies!

Cow's milk (under 1 year of age)
We encourage you to introduce **breastmilk** or **formula milk** before introducing cow's milk.

Foods that cause allergies should be introduced early!

- Egg (yolk and white together)
- Dairy (Yogurt, cheese, etc)
- Nuts (peanuts, tree nuts)
- Seafood (fish, shellfish)
- Wheat
- Soy
- Sesame, mustard (seeds, oils)

These foods are considered highly allergenic, but should be introduced early after starting solids.

Several recent stduies have shown delayed introduction of these foods, can actually increase the development of allergies.

Last updated: 2021-02-04
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