

STARTING SOLIDS

Starting solid foods is an important milestone in the life of a child. While parents ultimately decide when to start, there are signs for caregivers to be aware of that indicate a baby may be ready to start eating solid foods.

SIGNS OF READINESS FOR STARTING SOLIDS

1. Baby can hold head up in a high chair or infant seat with good head control.
2. Baby is a minimum of 4 months of age. Note: Most babies begin solids closer to 6 months of age.
3. Baby is about double their birth weight.
4. Baby opens her mouth when she sees others eating food and seems eager to eat.
5. Baby can move food from a spoon to their throat, without all of it spilling out.

TIPS FOR FIRST SOLID FOODS

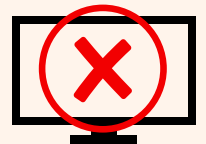
- Start slow: only half a spoonful of food is a good place to start.
- Mix familiar with unfamiliar: start meals with a little breastmilk or formula, then a half spoonful of food and end the meal with a little breastmilk or formula.
- Expect a mess! Spitting food out is very common for the first few feedings. Try thickening purees at first, then slowly thin out over time to acclimate the baby.
- Don't force: if the baby seems uninterested or agitated, try again another day.

SAFETY OF SOLIDS

- Always supervise children when eating, especially as they begin eating solids.
 - Advise older children not to share their food with young children
- Provide a calm, quiet and screen free environment for children while eating.
- Serve single-ingredient foods once every 3-5 days to note any potential allergic reactions.
- Only serve premade cereals that are made for babies and fortified with iron.
- Check with the child's parents if peanut-containing foods are safe to eat before serving anything containing peanuts.
- Modify foods that pose an increased risk of choking to a safe texture and shape:
 - Fruit: grapes, blueberries, raspberries, hard melon, raw apples and pears, fruit with pits or seeds
 - Vegetables: cherry tomatoes, raw carrots, green peas, edamame, sugar snap peas
 - Meat/Meat Alternates: hot dogs, chick peas/garbanzo beans
- Avoid foods that cannot be modified safely for young children (under age 4), such as popcorn, hard candy and nuts.



THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS (AAP) RECOMMENDS THAT INFANTS ARE FED SOLELY BREASTMILK FOR THE FIRST 6 MONTHS OF LIFE. THE CHILD'S PEDIATRICIAN WILL LIKELY RECOMMEND SUPPLEMENTATION OF VITAMIN D AND IRON WHILE THE BABY IS SOLELY FED BREASTMILK.



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