Learn about feeding baby first solid foods and the different stages of solid foods

Feeding Your Baby First Solid Foods or Jump to Solid Food Feeding Stages

Most Important: Offer your baby only those foods that are appropriate for the age of your baby.

You're baby will be more interested in solids when he/she is a little hungry but not starving – offer breast milk and/or formula first and then offer solids. If you are trying to feed a baby solids when she is very hungry, she may be more likely to resist.

Solid foods are a new experience and sometimes, baby may just be too hungry to want to sit for the new experience. She may not want to accept the spoon, the new tastes and the new textures.

Remember, solid foods are not meant to provide for baby nutritionally in the first few months, breast milk and/or formula fill this role.

ALWAYS ensure that your baby is sitting upright. If he cannot sit upright unassisted and does not have proper head control, it may not be the right time to begin solid foods. When he in a highchair or other infant-specific chair then he is less likely to choke. Never leave your baby unattended when he eating.

Introduce New Foods During the Morning or Early Afternoon

Introduce new foods during the morning or early afternoon. This will enable you to deal with any adverse reactions when your pediatrician is in office. Should an adverse reaction occur during the morning/early afternoon, it will cause the least amount of disruption in baby’s fragile routine.

Further, you should always introduce new foods after a nursing or bottle feeding. Your baby still receives his main source of nutrition from either breast milk or formula up to the one year old mark – do not let solids interfere with liquid intake.

Make it a Family Affair! Why not feed baby with the whole family instead of all by himself in his highchair? Place the highchair or feeding seat at the family table. Allow baby to sit at the
family table even if baby is not going to be eating. This will help baby become accustomed to mealtime routines. Your baby will enjoy being part of the “action” at the table.

Use a Comfy Utensil When Feeding Your Baby

Ensure you are using a soft comfy spoon. Remember baby’s gums may be tender from teething and a hard metal spoon may aggravate baby’s gums. If she refuses the spoon or if the spoon seems to make baby uncomfortable, use your finger. Many parents begin offering their babies solid foods by using their (clean and washed) finger as a spoon.

Don’t Make a Fuss Over the Feeding Session

Don’t make a fuss over the food – talk about the food you are offering and make some “yum yum” sounds however, ensure that you are not overwhelming your baby with your words and sounds. This may distract baby’s attention from the food and over-stimulate baby.

Follow your baby’s cues and allow him or her to explore the dish, utensils and the food itself. We always gave our babies their own spoon and a little bowl of food as we fed them.

Don’t Force Your Baby to Eat

Don’t force foods on your baby. If your baby does not open his or her mouth for the food immediately, wait for baby to open his mouth when food is offered. Always let her eat at her own pace and on her own terms. When baby turns her head away or stops opening her mouth, this probably means she had had enough; respect that and stop offering the food. You don’t want to continue to offer foods and run the risk of overriding her own appetite control system.

It’s ok if baby does not finish a “meal”. When baby signals she is done, then trust your baby’s instincts. Read How Much Food Should My Baby Eat? for more information.

Offer a Variety of Foods and Colors & You’ll be Offering all the Nutrients Needed!

Offer your baby different foods once you have begun to introduce several foods. Use different ways of preparing those baby foods and be willing to have a huge store of patience.

Don’t give up on a new food because baby won’t eat it the first time; continue offering the food or wait another day or week.
SOLID FOOD FEEDING STAGES:

Below is a short example of Feeding Stages a baby may go through. Please keep in mind that the ages shown are age ranges. It is impossible to accurately reflect specific foods and feeding patterns for all infants; infants begin solid foods at differing ages and thus their progression into solid foods may differ greatly. Always remember that solids do not replace the necessary nutrients or breast milk and/or formula in the first 12 months of life.

(4)6-8 Months – Baby Let’s Begin to Eat

“Baby” cereal and soft cooked thinly pureed fruits and veggies should be baby’s first solid food experiences. Single ingredients only and at a space of 4 days apart with introducing each new food. You may skip the cereal and begin with a fruit like avocado or begin with a veggie like butternut squash or sweet potato.

8-10 Months – We’re Moving On

Bring on some spices and the softly mashed, or chopped into fine pieces of fruits, vegetables, meats, pasta and diary such as yoghurt and cheeses. Pasta, veggies, and fruit should all be soft cooked and possibly mashed with a fork or masher. (Bananas need only be mashed.) Raw fruits are often introduced at this stage. Meats and proteins such as egg yolk, should be cooked and pureed or chopped into small soft bits. If offering tofu, you need not cook it first. Ensure dairy offered is easily manageable.

Remember, baby will not have molars until sometime around the 12-18 month age range. Foods should be easily mashed between the gums.

11-12 Months – We’re almost Toddlers now and we want to eat grown-up foods.

By this stage, your baby should be just on the brink of or is already eating “table foods”. She may already love self-feeding and may enjoy a variety of spices in her cuisine. Encourage a healthy exploration of foods, tastes and textures as well as eating utensils.
Always keep in mind that certain foods may still pose an allergy or other type of reaction risk.

Read more at
http://wholesomebabyfood.momtastic.com/solidfoodstages.htm#GfbGWVbZ1XMgYU97.99
Is Your Baby Ready for Solid Foods? Learn the Signs of Solid Food Readiness

Is Your Baby Ready for Solid Foods? Learn About Baby’s Signs of Readiness for Solid Foods

There are many signs that might lead you to believe that your little one is ready to begin eating solid foods. But how exactly do you know if your baby really is ready for solid foods? Has your baby doubled her birth weight? Does your baby have good head control?

Your baby may be 3 months old or 4 months old when you start to feel she may need "something more" than formula or breast milk. Maybe she is beginning to awaken more often at night or eat more often than “usual” and you wonder if introducing solid foods may be what she needs.

The best advice when considering starting solid foods for your baby is to “Watch the Baby – Not the Calendar" This is true for both breastfed and formula fed infants. Follow your baby’s hunger cues and you’ll never go wrong.

A Growth Spurt May be Confused with a Readiness for Solid Foods

Please keep in mind that a growth spurt will occur between 3-4 months of age. Your baby may begin to wake more frequently at night for a feeding and/or may begin to eat non-stop (cluster feed) as she once did as a newborn. This growth spurt often accounts for the increased hunger in your baby and it should not be taken as a sign that your baby needs solid foods added to her diet.

You may try offering your baby more frequent nursing sessions and/or bottle feedings instead of solids; you will find that within a week or two, your baby is oftentimes over the growth spurt and back to feeding “as usual”.

Here are a few “signs” that may indicate your baby is ready for Solid Foods:

🍎 Loss of tongue-thrust reflex – This allows baby to drink and swallow liquids with ease; with the tongue-thrust reflex still present, baby may simply drink in liquid purees or push the food back out. According to Dr. Jim Sears, in the first four months the tongue thrust reflex protects the infant against choking. When any unusual substance is placed on the tongue, it automatically protrudes outward rather than back. Between four and six
months this reflex gradually diminishes, and that glob of cereal actually may have a chance of making it from the tongue to the tummy!

Apple Ability to let you know she is full from a "meal" with signs such as turning away from the bottle or breast. This is important so that baby is able to self-regulate the amount of food being eaten. This helps stop baby from accidentally overeating as parents may continue to feed baby thinking that she is still hungry.

Apple Ability to sit up and hold head up unassisted

Apple Interest in your food (I tend to disagree with this one as when a baby reaches the age of 4-6 months, he is interested in putting everything in his mouth.)

Apple Doubling of birth weight

Apple Frequently waking in the middle of the night when a solid sleeping pattern had been established. This may not be the best indicator that your baby is ready for solids. Please keep in mind that a growth spurt will occur between 3-4 months of age, 6-7 months of age and also 9-10 months of age. Your baby may also be waking due to an illness or teething.
What is the “4 Day Wait Rule”? Is it important to follow the “4 Day Wait Rule” when starting solid foods?

The “4 Day Wait Rule” is a really simple way to check for possible reactions to new foods such as food sensitivities or food allergies. Remember that in addition to possible allergic reactions, foods can also cause digestive troubles like tummy pains, painful gas or even poop troubles. Introduce new foods, one food at a time and at a space of 4 days apart.

For example, introduce baby to avocado on Monday and then wait until Friday to introduce another food.

When you introduce a new food over the course of several days, you are better able to determine exactly how your baby is reacting to that food. It is important to follow the “four day wait” rule when introducing your baby to new solid foods, especially in the beginning stage. This is most important if you and/or your family members have a history of food allergies.

Following the four-day wait rule and introducing new foods one at a time will also enable you to easily begin an "elimination diet". If you suspect your infant has had an adverse reaction to a new food, you will have just a few foods to look to as the culprit.

Is the 4 day wait rule really necessary? Have you been told to abide by or toss it out the window along with other “old wives tales”?

As studies are now showing that waiting to introduce allergenic foods might not have any impact on whether a child develops a food allergy, the use of the 4 day wait rule is becoming obsolete and outdated.

There are many pediatricians who are now suggesting that babies may be introduced to a variety of foods, all at once, even during the first days of introducing solid foods.

The thought is that offering a wider variety of tastes and textures, early and often, will get baby’s taste buds excited and “trained” to enjoy flavors of all types. Offering a larger variety sooner, such as serving 4 new foods during a 2 or 4-day span, rather than later may just give baby the willingness and curiosity to try anything and everything put in front of him. And don’t forget the herbs and spices when introducing solid foods, earlier is better it is being said!
The "4 day wait rule" might be a good practice to follow if you have a history of food allergies.

Following a slow pattern of introducing solid foods to your baby will help pinpoint allergic reactions and to pinpoint any digestive issues a new food may cause. Allergic reactions typically will occur within the first 24 hours. Digestive issues with new foods (like diarrhea or constipation) may take longer to appear.

Introduce new foods during the morning or early afternoon.

This will enable you to deal with any adverse reactions when your pediatrician is in office. Should an adverse reaction occur during the morning/early afternoon, it will cause the least amount of disruption in baby’s fragile routine.

When Can I Mix Foods Without Worrying About the 4-Day Wait Rule?

Once you have introduced several new foods without a reaction, you can then begin to mix them together as you wish.

When Can I Stop Paying Attention to the 4 Day Wait Rule?

When your baby is around 9-10 months of age, you will have introduced many new foods and will have a good idea about what foods may be allergenic or cause your little one digestive upsets. At this stage, paying less attention to the 4-day wait rule is common. As you loosen up the 4-day wait rule, it is still important to pay attention to the new foods you offer your little one, especially those foods that do pose an allergy risk. Of course if your family has a history of food allergies and/or intolerances, you may want to continue to follow the 4-day wait rule until your baby is at least 12 months of age. As always, you should consult with your baby’s pediatrician.
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