

Starting Solid Foods for Your Baby

4-6 months

Breast and formula feeding is complete nutrition for the first 4-6 months. Your baby will feed 24-40 ounces per day.

When can your baby begin solid foods?

- Baby is sitting in a feeding chair with good head control
- Baby watches you eat, reaches for your food, and seems interested
- Baby can move food from a spoon into the back of their mouth

Which foods can your baby eat first?

- Your baby's first foods are your choice. They will thrive on premade (first stage) or homemade foods. Foods should be pureed or soft to prevent choking. Try to include iron fortified cereal, a variety of fruits and vegetables, and meat. Foods do not need to be introduced in a specific order, but it is wise to introduce one new food at a time
- Early exposure to common food allergy culprits such as eggs, dairy, soy, peanut, tree nut products, and fish can actually lower the risk of your baby developing a food allergy. Commercial allergen feeding products are also available. However, if your baby has severe eczema and/or an egg allergy, this recommendation should be discussed further with your doctor.
- Babies do not need juice. Healthy babies do not need extra water before 6 months.

Which foods should be avoided?

- Raw honey under 1 year of age
- Foods that are a choking hazard (raw vegetables, nuts and seeds, popcorn, whole grapes)
- Highly processed foods
- Sweets or foods with added sugar or salt

What about baby led weaning?

- Some babies do prefer feeding themselves by 6 months of age by holding larger chunks of textured but soft foods
- Your baby must have mastered both bringing their hands to their mouth and effective chewing movements. Constant observation during mealtime is necessary.

How to start healthy eating habits?

- Your baby will gradually get used to the process of eating by sitting up, taking food from a spoon, resting between bites, and stopping when full. Make family mealtimes a priority and lead by example with wise food choices for all. Positive early experiences help your baby develop smart eating patterns for life.

6-9 months

Your baby will take 16-32 ounces of breast milk or formula a day and eat solid food 2-3 times a day. You can start to offer a maximum of 8 oz of water in a sippy cup after 6 months. Water with fluoride (city water or nursery water) can help prevent tooth decay. Advance your baby to more coarse or chunky foods (stage 2 and 3) that do require more chewing. You can start to offer finger foods when you baby can sit independently and bring objects to their mouth. Suggestions include soft fruits, cooked vegetables, cereals, noodles, breads, soft cheese, small pieces of meat/fish/tofu, yogurt, and eggs. Close observation during mealtime is necessary.

For additional information, please visit www.healthychildren.org