

Infant Nutrition – Raising a Healthy Eater

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS RECOMMENDS STARTING SOLIDS BETWEEN 4 AND 6 MONTHS OF AGE.

Age alone does not determine when baby is ready for solids. Let baby's developmental markers be your guide to starting solids.

- Baby can sit well with support.
- Baby's tongue thrust reflex has largely disappeared.
- Baby is interested: watching the spoon, opening his mouth, leaning forward.

Trying to feed an infant who is not developmentally ready can be frustrating for both of you. Don't force it. Babies are adept at reading facial expressions; if you are anxious, expect baby to be anxious also.

Problems with Starting Solids Earlier than 4 Months

- Early feeding of solids increases the risk of allergies, due to baby's immature digestive system.
- Baby's tongue thrust reflex pushes the food out, making spoon feeding difficult and often unsuccessful.



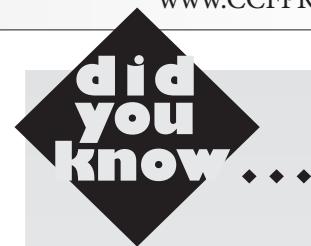
- When a baby cannot sit on his own, some well-meaning caregivers attempt to "help" by seating baby in a semi-reclining position to feed him or by adding cereal to his bottle. Feeding in this way is a choking hazard.

Contrary to popular opinion, there is no compelling evidence to indicate that feeding solids will help a baby sleep through the night.

"Ready, Set, SLOW" or How to Introduce Solids

There is no rush to get baby to eat a huge variety or volume of solid foods. Baby's major nutritional needs are being met by the breast milk or iron fortified formula until his first birthday. Knowing this should help everyone relax and make starting solids enjoyable. (See the progression of texture table on bottom of page 3).

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- ▶ In a recent study two-thirds of the objects surgically removed from young children's tracheas were nuts, raw carrots and popcorn.
- ▶ About 50 percent of children in low income families drink twice the amount of juice recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- ▶ Forty-nine percent of lowest income parents report their children drink 2 or more cups of juice on a typical day.
- ▶ Food insecurity and hunger are an invisible crisis in the United States. Sixteen million American children are food insecure.
- ▶ For young children, food insecurity has lifelong consequences that affect their health, school readiness and performance, as well as their growth and development.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics, C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Report on Children's Health, Sesame Street

Quotable Quotes

“You better cut the pizza in four pieces because I'm not hungry enough to eat six.”

— Yogi Berra

INSIDE:

- ◆ Time for a Cup
- ◆ Cracker Snacker Activity

- ◆ Recipes
- ◆ Food Funny

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Foods To Be Avoided for the Entire 1st Year

- Common allergens: cow’s milk, yogurt, peanut butter, egg white, citrus fruits and shellfish
- Choking hazards such as meat sticks, hot dogs, sausages, breaded fish products, raw carrots and nuts
- Honey, due to the possibility of botulism spores; this includes honey that has been baked in products such as Honey Graham Crackers and Honey Nut Cheerios
- Jarred baby food dinners and desserts and jarred or dry infant cereal with fruit which are nutritionally inferior to single ingredient foods
- Juices and sweetened beverages

First Feedings

Start feeding baby in your arms, where he feels secure and supported or in a high chair to allow for easy face-to-face contact while feeding. A typical schedule for a 6–8 month old would include solids 1–3 times a day and 24–32 ounces of breast milk and/or formula. By about 10 months, baby should be joining the family at mealtimes to foster pleasant associations with food and family.

Signs that Baby Is Getting Full

Baby will continue to open his mouth when he sees the spoon, if he is still hungry. Begin by serving just a few teaspoons and build up to a few tablespoons. Keep feedings pleasant and let him take the lead. When he closes his mouth to the spoon or turns his head away, he is finished eating. *Every baby is unique and needs caregivers who tune into his cues and respond appropriately.*

“Tuning in on what your baby tells you—and understanding it—is an essential part of allowing your baby to eat and grow well and letting her grow up feeling good about herself and about the world.”

— Ellyn Satter
Child of Mine; Feeding with Love and Good Sense

Finger Foods

You do not have to wait until baby has teeth to begin serving finger foods. As soon as baby is sitting up and has the coordination to hold and bring foods to his mouth, give

him lots of practice with finger foods. Make sure anything you give him is soft, easy to swallow and breaks down into small pieces, which will not cause choking. He will enjoy “O” shaped cereals, shredded cheese, soft ripe fruits, cooked vegetable pieces, finely chopped pieces of cooked meat and small pasta shapes. **Always** supervise baby while he is eating.

Making Your Own Baby Foods

Save money while providing nutritious, organic, fresh foods. Adjust and advance textures to match baby’s ability to “gum” the food. This progression of texture is important so that baby doesn’t get “stuck” on purees.

Due to naturally occurring nitrates, home-prepared spinach, beets, green beans, squash and carrots should be avoided until infants are at least 4 months or older.

On baby’s 1st birthday, transition to whole milk in a cup unless you are continuing to breast-feed

Baby only needs about 16 ounces of milk a day at this time. Whole milk is an excellent food, however it is a poor source of iron. A one year old drinking milk all day long will have little room in his tummy for all the other foods he needs to grow well.

Choking Hazards for Babies and Toddlers

Toddlers like to put all kinds of things in their mouths, and do not have the back molars for grinding tougher food. Never serve children under 4 years of age any round, firm food that has not been completely chopped. Vegetables should be steamed to make chewing easier. Other choking hazards include hot dogs, raw carrots, nuts and seeds, popcorn, large chunks of meat or cheese, whole grapes, scoops of peanut butter, raisins, chewing gum and hard, goeey or sticky candy.

For further reading consider Ellyn Satter’s, ***Child of Mine; Feeding with Love and Good Sense***. Author of the division of responsibility in feeding, Ellyn offers parents and caregivers a practical and empowering guide to feeding.

So there you have it, a short primer on a slightly messy but largely fascinating process of starting baby on solid foods. Remember, you are not only putting food in baby’s tummy, you are beginning baby on a path of lifelong healthy eating habits.

(Continued on bottom of page 3)

— Donna Green R.D.
Contra Costa Child Care Council

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Time for a Cup

OFFER A SIPPY CUP when baby is 6 to 8 months old—choose a cup with a lid that has a free flowing spout or remove the no spills gadget. A small cup will be easier for little mouths and hands to manage.

Offer 1–3 ounces of breast milk, infant formula or water in the cup. Offer more if baby wants more. *Do not offer juice or sweetened beverages.* At first you may need to help baby hold the cup and taste what's in it. There will be spills. Be patient, have a towel ready and remember baby is *learning* how to drink from a cup.



Make weaning easy by not letting baby get too attached to the bottle. Use the bottle for feeding and then put it away. Don't let baby crawl or walk around with a bottle and offer only breast milk, formula or water in the bottle, do not put juice or sweet drinks in the bottle. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends weaning from the bottle and drinking from cups by one year of age. At 12 months whole milk can replace the breast milk or formula in the cup.

A good time to practice with the cup is when baby is eating solid foods, so offer the cup at all meal times. Sit baby in a highchair. Feed some food with a spoon. Offer a few sips from the cup. Let baby see you and others drink from a cup. Baby will learn by watching and practicing.

Drinking from a cup is the first step in weaning from the bottle. When baby is about 10 months old gradually use the cup more often and the bottle less. Offer meals and snacks at regular times each day with a sippy cup available at each meal and snack. Do not allow baby to walk around with a sippy cup.

Sippy cups are intended to help transition a child to a real cup, so help baby practice drinking from a cup with *no* lid. Hold the cup for baby while he sips and practice with the cup frequently.

Comfort a crying baby with love, hugs, a blanket or a toy, not a bottle or sippy cup. Learning to drink from a cup takes time. Be patient and consistent.

— Catherine Stafford
 Contra Costa Child Care Council

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Age Ranges to Introduce Types of Foods & Progression of Textures*

4–7 Months	7–8 Months	8–10 Months	10–12 Months
Draws lower lip in as spoon is removed, moves food from front to back of mouth	Up down munching	Bites food, side to side tongue movement	Rotary chewing, grinding, holding spoon
Purees, thinned at first	Purees, mashed foods	Lumpier purees, minced, soft foods and finger foods	Soft, cooked, chopped table foods
Infant rice cereal prepared with breast milk or formula, pureed fruits and vegetables, served one at a time to check for adverse reactions	Pureed meat, cooked egg yolk, mashed cooked fruits & vegetables, Infant barley, oat cereals	Finely chopped meats, poultry, fruits and vegetables, cheese, cottage cheese, beans, lentils, infant mixed cereals	Cut up tender pieces of chopped meat, poultry or fish, fruits and vegetables, toast, pasta, all infant cereals
Breastmilk or iron fortified infant formula for the entire 1st year			

*not a rigid time frame

Cinco de Mayo Slow Cooker Chicken Tortilla Soup

Chicken breast halves.....	4	Lime juice.....	2 Tbsp
Tomatoes, diced.....	1 can (28 oz)	Cilantro, fresh, chopped.....	½ cup
Onions, chopped.....	2	Avocado, sliced.....	1
Garlic, minced.....	2 cloves	Mozzarella cheese, shredded.....	1 cup
Cumin.....	1 tsp	Baked Tortilla Chips:	
Green or jalapeno chilies, minced.....	2	Corn tortilla.....	10
Chicken broth.....	1 can (49½ oz)	Olive oil spray (optional)	

1. Combine the first seven ingredients in a 5½ to 6 quart slow cooker. Cover and cook on low 7–8 hours.
2. Remove chicken and bones. Shred the chicken from the bone and return meat to the slow cooker. Add lime juice and cilantro.
3. Cut tortillas into 6 wedges. Lightly spray with olive oil, if desired. Bake at 400°F for 10–12 minutes, until crisp and lightly browned. Place baked chips into bowls and ladle soup over top. Top with avocado and cheese.

Yield: 10 servings

Meets requirement for grains/breads and protein/meat alternate

— Adapted from *Simmering Solutions*

Just for Baby

When preparing your own baby food, use organic produce whenever possible. Puree or mash and freeze in ice cube trays. Store cubes in zip lock bags. At mealtime thaw one or two cubes and warm if needed.

Soup for Baby

Bring low sodium chicken broth or stock to a boil. Add chopped chicken, peas, celery, onion and potato, reduce heat and simmer until meat is cooked and vegetables are tender about 30 minutes. Mash the soup to the consistency the infant can tolerate.

Beef and Veggies Mash

Brown ground beef, add chopped potatoes, carrots, onion, a little broth and cook until tender. Chop finely, grind or puree.

Little Lentils and Sweet Potato Puree

Cook lentils until tender. Pierce sweet potato with a fork and microwave about 8–10 minutes until very tender. Mash the potato and lentils together.

Food Funny Q: Waiter, will my pizza be long?
A: No sir, it will be round!

Activity Corner

CRACKER SNACKERS

This hands on activity lets kids build a tasty snack. This creative snack also teaches about the different food groups.

Set up the cracker snacker bar, creating signs to label each food group: whole grains, fruits, vegetables and protein. Group bowls of toppings in their food groups:

- Variety of whole grain crackers such as whole wheat and graham
- Thinly sliced fruit such as kiwi, strawberry, pear, apple and banana
- Thinly sliced vegetables such as zucchini, cucumber, avocado and tomato
- Thinly sliced cheese, lean turkey or ham, hummus and peanut butter

Invite children to take two crackers each and a variety of toppings on their plate. Let the children build their own cracker snacker. Suggest that they try at least one item from each food group.

Use this activity to stress the need to eat a variety of foods. What were some favorite combinations? Who put all food groups on one cracker?

— Adapted from *Nemours Foundation*

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