

Tips to Introducing Solids

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Speak to your infant's pediatrician prior to starting solids as it may be advised to start closer to 6 months. Only occasionally does a rapidly growing baby need solid foods to meet nutritional needs before the age of six months. However, after 6 months solids will begin to provide more and more of baby's growing nutritional needs.

It will be a challenge and an adventure to get the food into the infant's mouth during the first feedings. Proceed with care slowly and respond to the infant cues for hunger or fullness. Your baby will let you know when he/she is done eating by turning away from the spoon. As the child grows and his or her meal choices expand, continue to allow the infant to control the situation.

- Use a baby sized spoon with a long handle.
- Infant must be placed in an upright position as it helps with swallowing. Place infant in an age appropriate seat such as a high chair, tumble form feeder, booster seat or Bumbo seat. Place a small amount of food on age appropriate spoon.
- Often, at first the infant will take only 2-3 bites. Do not force your baby to eat.
- Introduce a variety of foods one at a time (see [Food Allergy article](#)). This will instill good lifelong habits.
- Do not feed honey, nuts*, very salty or sweet foods, and cow's milk before 12 months of age. Avoid large pieces of food. Refer to: Food Safety for Baby.
- Fruit Juice should not be offered to children less than 6 months of age. Supplemental fluids, (not including breast milk or formula) should be limited to 4 ounces per day unless otherwise noted by the pediatrician.
- Fruit juice offers no nutrition benefits over whole fruits for infants older than 6 months of age and children. When offered, limit to 100% fruit juice.
- Choose foods that contain iron, zinc, and calcium. These foods are essential for a child's growth.

Well meaning family members and friends may advise that early addition to solid foods will help baby sleep through the night. Sleeping through the night is an individual developmental milestone, and the amount of food consumed by the infant doesn't relate to a good night's sleep.

*The AAP recommends that infants with a strong family history of egg allergy wait until 24 months and for peanuts/nuts/fish/shellfish until 36 months.

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