

BEVERLY HILLS PEDIATRICS

Medical Topics

INTRODUCING SOLID FOODS

When can my baby eat solids?

Most babies are ready to eat solids between 4 and 6 months of age. We recommend waiting until 6 months to start. At this age babies have improved head control, as well as tongue and mouth coordination. Also energy needs increase at this age, making this an ideal time to introduce solids. In the beginning, solid foods do not necessarily replace a breast milk or formula feeding, they are given as an addition.

New research shows that the order of introduction of solid foods after 6 months of age – even foods considered “highly allergic” like eggs and fish – have no bearing on future allergies. As a result, the very structured, step-wise approach of introducing solids in years past has been replaced with a more fun, liberal approach. So, if you want to puree your entire dinner and offer it to your child that is your prerogative but if you would like some structure, here are some tips:

4-8 months

Start with pureed foods – such as cereals, fruits, veggies, yogurts and even pureed meat products. If giving cereals (rice, oatmeal, barley) mix it with breast milk or formula. Feed these to your baby with a spoon. Your child will let you know how much he/she wants, follow their cues. Within 2-3 months of starting solid foods, your baby will be eating three solid meals a day.

Introduce water in a sippy or straw cup when starting solids. Don't worry if your child doesn't take to the cup right away or doesn't drink much, it's for practice and fun

Watch for signs of an allergic reaction including diarrhea, rash or vomiting. If any of these occur, stop using the new food and notify your pediatrician.

8-12 months

Encourage finger foods. Your child can eat the foods that you are eating however they still will not be able to chew well so pieces should be able to dissolve in their mouth even if they pick them up. Pea sized or smaller is a good size to start with. You can also use foods that are “too big” – pizza crust, celery, and bagels. Your child can also taste the spices you are cooking with. Encourage your child to taste and love the different flavors and spices that you like to eat. No need to oversalt the food - it's not good for any of us.

Breast feeding may decrease to 3-5 times per day and formula intake will likely decrease from 28-32 oz per day to 20-24 oz per day.

Your baby's diet should now include all table foods except raw honey.

Do not give raw honey prior to one year of age (can cause botulism).

Avoid nuts, popcorn, chewing gum, whole grapes, hard candy or other small hard foods until 3 years of age due to the risk of choking.

All families should have Children's Benadryl at home. It can be used in children <2 years of age to treat allergies. Please see our dosage sheet for correct dosages.

Remember, these are just guidelines. Follow your baby's cues and make meals fun. You worry about the quality of the food and let them worry about the quantity. Have fun!