

Introducing solid foods

Your baby will be ready to start solid foods between 4 and 6 months. There is no reason to give foods, other than breast milk or formula, before your baby is 4 months old.

Giving solid food too early may cause:

- ❖ allergies
- ❖ stomach upset
- ❖ constipation or diarrhea
- ❖ overweight babies

Your baby will be ready for solid foods when he:

- ❖ can sit up with support
- ❖ hold head up
- ❖ puts hands together
- ❖ puts toys in mouth
- ❖ seems hungry after 8 to 10 breast feedings or 32 ounces of formula
- ❖ acts interested in foods you are eating.

How to begin solid foods

- ❖ Choose a time when you and your baby are well rested and comfortable.
- ❖ Start with a dry infant cereal between 4 and 6 months of age. This should be a single grain iron-fortified cereal such as rice. After 6 months of age, you may slowly begin giving other foods.
- ❖ Give only one new food at a time. Wait 3 to 5 days before starting another food. Watch for allergic reactions (hives, vomiting, diarrhea).

- ❖ Always use a small baby spoon.
- ❖ If the food is disliked, try it again later.
- ❖ Never put cereal in the bottle.
- ❖ Remember, your baby is the best judge of how much to eat. Never force your baby to eat. A fussy baby may need attention, not food.

How much should you feed your baby?

- ❖ Offer cereal 1-2 times each day.
- ❖ Start with a very thin mixture of cereal and liquid. Gradually thicken as baby learns to eat from a spoon.

How to Make Infant Cereal

1. Measure a small amount of cereal (1 tbsp.) into a bowl.
2. Add breast milk or formula (2 tbsp.) to the cereal and stir.
3. Feed baby with a small spoon.



Feeding Hints:

- ❖ Bottles are for formula, breast milk and plain water only. Do not put juice or other drinks in the bottle.
- ❖ Do not put solid foods (like cereal) in baby bottles or infant feeders. It may cause the baby to choke. Spoon feeding helps baby to learn to use his lips, tongue, gums and teeth. This will also help speech development.
- ❖ Put only enough baby food for one feeding in a clean dish. Throw away any food left in the feeding dish.
- ❖ Food in the jar should be tightly sealed and stored in the refrigerator after it is opened. It can be safely kept for 2-3 days.
- ❖ Babies should not be given sweets because sugar can spoil the baby's appetite and does not provide any nutrients.
- ❖ A baby put to bed with a bottle (breast milk, formula, milk, fruit juice or sweetened drink) can develop ear infections, tooth decay and gum disease. Babies should only be fed when they are awake and sitting up or held.

Home Made Baby Foods

Home made baby foods are a low cost and easy way to feed your baby. Follow these simple tips when making food at home:

- ❖ Be sure that everything - your hands, the equipment and the food - is very clean.
- ❖ Use foods that are as fresh as possible.
- ❖ Be sure to remove pits, seeds, and skins from fruits and vegetables. Remove extra fat, gristle, skin and bones from meat, poultry and fish.
- ❖ Do not add butter, margarine, salt, sugar or seasoning.
- ❖ To make pureed food thinner, add breast milk, formula or water.
- ❖ You may make enough for more than one day. Cover prepared food and refrigerate. Use within 2-3 days.
- ❖ For longer storage, make a larger batch, pour it into ice cube trays and freeze. Then store the frozen cubes in labeled, dated, airtight freezer bags. Use within 1 month. For baby's meal, simply heat or thaw the frozen food.
- ❖ Do not use home made beets, carrots or spinach because it may make your baby sick.

Commercial Baby Foods

- ❖ Buy plain cereal in boxes, not jars. You get more for your money.
- ❖ Use single foods like beef, chicken, peas, and peaches. These products are better for your baby and cost less than combination or mixed dinners.
- ❖ Avoid desserts, puddings, cookies and other foods high in sugar.
- ❖ Wash food jars and lids thoroughly before opening.
- ❖ When you open a food jar, listen for a "pop." This tells you the jar was sealed tightly.



Developed by:

Debbie Long, M.S., R.D.
Marie Nagata, B.S.

Distributed by:



Division of Community & Family
Health Services
Utah WIC Program
288 North 1460 West
Box 144470
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4470

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Feeding Your Baby Solid Foods



This handout will help you begin giving your baby foods other than breast milk or formula.

Supplemental Food Program for
Women, Infants and Children