

dr.mouradian's recommendations for starting solid food

Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine

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- introduce solids anywhere from 4-6 months (baby should have good head control)
- the AAP(American Academy of Pediatrics) recommends all food can be started after 4 months except ***no honey or fresh citrus (oranges, tangerines, mandarins, grapefruit, pineapples) until after 12 months of age***
- start when your baby is ready, but definitely by 6 months
- the best sign that your baby is ready is if they are interested your food as you eat
- if the food is upsetting baby, stop and retry after a week (tongue thrusting food out is normal)
- baby's main nutrition comes from formula/breastmilk around 18-24 ounces a day until age 1,
- in addition to that starting at **6 months** an iron source is needed for growth (in the form of infant cereal/chicken/meat/beans/lentils)
- the goal of food intro is to expose baby to a variety of healthy foods, and advance textures to prepare them for the food based diet transition at age 1 year
- new recommendations include "cultural eating" which means feeding your baby food YOU eat on your plate ***including*** seasonings and salt
- always try to eat together even if baby is just playing with food during your meal

How to start....

- start water at 4 months regardless if starting solids since can take 4-8 weeks for baby to figure out how to drink water
- offer baby ***fluoridated*** water multiple times a day between milk feeds, definitely with solids as well (put 4 ounces in bottle, baby will take what is needed, may even just play with it, and that's fine)
- at 6 months put water in a sippy cup or training cup
- if you want to start with cereal -mix with breastmilk, formula, or water (enough to make it soupy) and use a spoon
- never put cereal in the bottle***, this will make baby overweight
- baby led weaning (giving baby pieces of food to hold and chomp on) is fine if your baby wants that, but all babies will be ready for that at different ages

-IMPORTANT RULE -> only one NEW food every 3-4 days (in case of a reaction, you will know what caused it)

-signs of allergy: diarrhea/vomiting/rash/swelling of lips/tongue

-minimum feeds required for growth; one serving of iron (either 2 tablespoons of infant cereal or 2 ounces of chicken/meat/beans/lentils) starting at 6 months, and 2 servings starting at 10 months

-another new recommendation is to start allergenic foods as early as possible to decrease chances of allergies, especially **peanut** products, but including all nuts, soy products, sesame products, eggs (considered 2 separate ingredients, start with yolk for 3-5 days and if good add yellow for another 3-5 days) and shellfish (lobster/crab/shrimp etc)

-sometimes sudden refusal to eat means they need different textures or they want to feed themselves

-if getting “baby food” always read ingredients list when first introducing, the title may be deceiving

-giving baby food you are cooking for yourselves is always better than buying “baby food” or making separate food for the baby that is bland or not what you normally will eat

-the mesh feeder is a handy tool for texture intro and teething help (cold peeled piece of apple or cucumber can soothe sore gums)

-choking hazards should be avoided until after 3.5-4 years of age: this includes actual pieces of nuts, raw carrots, hard candy, popcorn, raisins, whole grapes, coin sliced hot dogs, and coin sliced cheese sticks etc.

-no juice until after age 2 years (or never)

For the highly allergic baby...

If your baby has allergies, or is at high risk for developing allergies due to family history or other issue, consult with your pediatrician prior to starting any solids. Remember you may not see the allergic reaction the first time the allergen is given, it may take multiple exposures.

**for additional trustworthy info visit healthychildren.org, the AAP website for parents, or @Dr_KarineMouradian, www.drkarinemouradianpediatrician.com

derived from AAP guidelines, 02/2025