

dr.mouradian's recommendations for starting solid food

When to start.....

- 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 shellfish, honey, or citrus until after 12 months of age**
- the most obvious sign that your baby is ready is if they are interested in your food
- if the food is upsetting baby, stop and retry after a week or 2 (tongue thrusting food out is normal)
- baby's main nutrition comes from either formula or breast milk for the first year, in addition to that starting at **six months** an iron source is needed (in the form of the fortified infant cereal to start and then meats/beans later on)
- the goal of the food intro is to expose the baby to a variety healthy foods and advance textures to prepare them for the food based diet transition at age 1 year
- solids should not replace or decrease the breastmilk/formula significantly, they are in addition to it

How to start....

- it is better to feed the baby solids between nursing/bottle feeds (if baby has a bottle/breast every 3 hours, after 1.5 hours feed solids, then return to bottle after 1.5 hours), keeping the milk separate from the food lends to easier transition at age 1 year to a food based diet,
- start with **single grain** cereal (like oatmeal, barley, or quinoa) mix with breast milk, formula, or water (enough to make it soupy)
- after introduction of cereal (when baby gets the swallowing thing down) you can start adding pureed vegetables and fruits
- 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**
- goal for feeds is 2-4 tablespoons (dry)cereal with 2-4 ounces of fruit or vegetable once/day
- do this for about 4-8 weeks
- then go to 3-4 tablespoons cereal with 2-4 ounces of fruit or vegetable twice a day for another 4-8 weeks
- next go to feeding 3 times a day, at this point baby is usually around 8-9 months and you have been through many vegetable and fruits--it is time to introduce the proteins like meats, fish, beans, lentils, tofu, cheese, nut butters, yogurt(whole milk organic), eggs (start with the yolk for 3-4 days, if doing well can add the whites as well)
- feed only by spoon, *never put cereal in the bottle*
- offer fluoridated water in a bottle at least once a day, definitely after solids (offer around 2 ounces, baby will take what is needed, may even just play with it for months, and that's fine)

Other helpful hints....

- at 6 months introduce water in a sippy cup
- textures and the advancement from purees to thicker foods and finger foods is very child dependent, always start with smooth textures and slowly advance (regardless of the label on the baby food) as your baby tolerates, sometimes sudden refusal means they need different textures or they want to feed themselves
- always read ingredient lists when first introducing foods, the title may be deceiving
- the mesh feeder is a handy tool for texture intro and teething help (cold peeled piece of apple or

cucumber can soothe sore gums)

-don't forget avocado as a good fruit

-as baby gets to be a year old, most table foods are fine as long as they are cut small enough to avoid choking (same rule of one new food every 3-4 days still applies)

-choking hazards that should be avoided until after ages 3-4 years: raw carrots, hard candy, nuts, popcorn, raisins, whole grapes, coin sliced hot dogs, and coin sliced cheese sticks etc.

-according to the AAP 4 oz of juice is fine after 6 months, however, preferably no juice for at least the first year (unless constipated)

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

derived from AAP guidelines, 1/2018