

## When To Start Solid Foods.

There are certain signs as a baby grows and develops that tell you when they are ready for solid foods. Certain changes must take place in your baby's mouth before she can eat from a spoon. Every baby is different and develops at a different rate. Every time baby cries does not mean she is hungry. Babies usually do not need solid foods before 4-6 months. The following chart can help you decide when your baby is ready for solid foods.

### Readiness Signs To Watch For

### Foods To Serve

#### *Birth To 5 Months*

*P P*

Up and down movement of tongue allows baby to suck easily

Breast milk or formula

#### *5 To 7 Months*

*P P*

Back and forth movement of tongue allows baby to begin to eat solids from a small spoon

Baby sits with support

Breast milk or formula

**Add only one food at a time:**

One-grain infant cereals such as rice

Strained vegetables

Fruits and fruit juices

**Wait 3 days between adding new foods.**

#### *7 To 9 Months*

*P P*

Up and down munching movements appear.

Baby can hold small objects in hand and sit-up without support.

Breast milk or formula

Continue adding new strained foods, one at a time. Include meats and cooked egg yolk.\*

Finger foods and soft, mashed foods (soft bite-sized cooked pieces of vegetables, soft pieces of fruit without peel or seeds, cheese, unsalted crackers, teething crackers.

**Avoid foods that baby can choke on:** large pieces of hotdogs, candy, nuts, corn, raw apples and carrots, popcorn, grapes, peas,

#### *To 12 Months*

*P P*

Baby begins to chew well, has better tongue movement, and sits well.

Breast milk or formula

Plain table foods, chopped or mashed finger foods

\*Whole egg and whole cow's milk can be started after 12 months.

\* Do not use skim milk until the baby is 2 years old.

# Solid Foods: Baby and Me

**Add only one new food at a time.** Baby should learn the taste and feel of each food before he is given another one. Try a food for at least 3 days before offering a new food. If your baby is allergic to a food, you will know which one.

**Offer single foods** such as pureed peas or carrots, before combinations.

**Add vegetables before fruits.** It may be harder to interest your infant in vegetables after he has tasted the naturally sweeter fruits.

**Never force a baby to eat.** It is normal for a baby to refuse to eat a new food. Wait a day or two and offer it again. If she still refuses it, do not force it. You may try again in a few days or weeks. In the meantime feed your baby a food that she likes. Never force a baby to eat more than she wants.

**If a new food disagreed with baby, stop feeding it to the child.** When your baby is feeling well, try a different food.

**Give very small amounts of solids at first.** One to two teaspoons is enough when beginning to add solids.

**Keep it simple and healthy.** Babies do not need salt, sugar, butter or other seasonings added to foods.

## **When feeding:**

Always use a small spoon. Never use a fork or put cereal in a bottle.

Place food on the tip of a baby spoon and on the middle of the tongue. This allows for easier swallowing.

Do not feed baby food directly from the jar. Spoon enough food for the meal into a bowl. This will protect the food in the jar from germs that can make the baby sick. Refrigerate the food left in the jar and use within **2 days**.

Babies should not be put to bed with a bottle. Someone needs to hold the baby to prevent choking, tooth decay and ear infections.

Soda, Kool Aid, punch drinks or sweetened tea should not be given often. When they are given do so from a cup instead of a bottle.





