

Sources

American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org.

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, www.eatright.org.

Feeding Your 4- to 7-month Old, Kids Health, www.kidshealth.org, 2011.

Wholesome Baby Food, www.wholesomebabyfood.com.

Solid Foods: How to Get Your Baby Started, Mayo Clinic, www.mayoclinic.com.

Feeding Infants—A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Programs, United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services.

Helpful Websites

Healthy Children, Ages & Stages: www.healthychildren.org

Wholesome Baby Food: www.wholesomebabyfood.org

Dr. Greene: www.drgreene.com

Helpful Infant Feeding Apps

Little Bites

Track your baby's adventure into the world of solid foods. Browse quick and healthy recipes catered to your baby's dietary needs.

Baby Food Tracker

Keep track of your baby's meals including brand, flavor, Yum Meter, allergies, notes, and more.

Resources for Parents

Starting Solids: The Essential Guide to Your Baby's First Foods

Annabel Karmel, 2010

The perfect introductory book to first foods with simple, practical advice. It features more than 50 recipes, menu planners, tips to help parents encourage their babies to explore new tastes, and answers to key feeding problems such as allergies, fussy eating, weight concerns and messy eaters.

The Baby Food Bible: A Complete Guide to Feeding Your Child

Eileen Behan, RD, 2008

Features a guide to more than 100 foods recommended for infants and toddlers informing parents when to introduce these foods into a child's diet. Behan also provides an alphabetized index that explains how to buy, store, prepare and serve these foods, with delicious recipes for every meal.

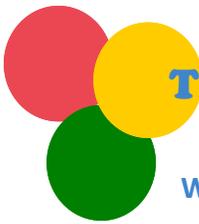
Feeding Your Child

A Guide to Your Child's Nutritional Needs



The Four to Seven Month Old





The Four to Seven Month Old

When Should Solids be Introduced?

For most infants, breast milk and/or iron-fortified formula provide all the nutrients required for the first 6 months of life. Current recommendations suggest delaying the addition of solid foods until your baby is around **6 months of age**. However, each child's readiness depends on his/her own rate of development. Some essential skills needed before successfully starting solids include:

- ◆ **Loss of tongue-thrusting reflex.** Before this age, babies push their tongues out against food instead of swallowing. When your baby stops doing this, he/she can then start to take food from a spoon and swallow.
- ◆ **Opens mouth when food is near.** Your baby may be ready for solids when he/she watches you eat, reaches for your food and/or seems eager to be fed.
- ◆ **Holds head up.** Your baby should be able to sit with support and have good head control before introducing solids.

Your baby may take a little while to “learn” how to eat solids. During these months, you will still be providing your baby's usual feedings of breast milk or iron-fortified formula (24-32 oz per 24 hours) and meeting his basic nutritional needs. This is an opportunity to introduce eating as a pleasant experience and expose him to a variety of flavors and textures. If your baby is not interested, wait a few days or a week and try again.

Around this time you may also experience a **“nursing strike.”** Your baby is much more aware of his surroundings now and gets distracted much easier. Don't give up! Nursing strikes generally don't last long; continue to offer the breast often!

Where to Begin?

- ◆ **Pick a time of day when your baby is not tired or upset.** You want your baby to be a little hungry, but not starving. You can start solids with any feeding.
- ◆ **Have your baby sit supported in your lap or in an upright infant seat.** Infants who sit well, usually around 6 months of age, can be placed in a high chair with a safety strap.
- ◆ **Start with single-ingredient foods.** Try vegetables, fruit, meat or whole grains.
- ◆ **Introduce one new food at a time.** Wait at least 3-4 days before trying something new. This will allow you to identify foods that your baby may be sensitive or allergic to.
- ◆ **Keep trying.** Research shows it takes repeated exposures (up to 10-15 times) before a baby accepts some new foods. If your baby doesn't like a particular food, try it again another time.

- ◆ **Start with 1 teaspoon of food.** Gradually give more food as your baby accepts it, recognizing when he indicates he is full.
- ◆ **Learn to understand your baby's hunger and fullness cues.** By responding to these cues, you will be able to help your baby understand his own feelings of hunger and fullness.

“Feed me!”
Opens mouth and moves towards spoon
Tries to swipe food toward mouth
Gestures— nods, points or grabs spoon

“No more, please!”
Turns head or pushes away from spoon
Spits out familiar foods or pushes them away
Becomes distracted or notices surroundings more

First Foods

For most babies, it doesn't matter what solid foods are offered first. There is no medical evidence that introducing solids in any particular order has an advantage for your baby. Experiment with nutrient-dense fruits, vegetables, whole grain cereal or even meats! Within a few months of starting solids, your baby's daily diet should include a variety of foods each day that may include:

-  Breast milk and/or formula
-  Meats
-  Fish and shellfish
-  Vegetables/Fruits
-  Cereal
-  Eggs

High Allergen Foods: To Give or Not to Give?

In the past, it was recommended to delay the introduction of high allergen foods like eggs, nuts and fish. Evidence now shows that **high allergen foods can be introduced around 6 months of age**, just as you would any other solid foods.



You can feed your baby eggs, wheat, fish, shellfish, or yogurt (delay whole cow's milk until after age 1 due to nutritional concerns) at any time. To be cautious, you can choose to introduce these foods after your baby is 6 months old and other solids have been tolerated (vegetables, fruits, cereal). Nut products can be consumed but at this age whole nuts and nut butters are choking hazards so it's best to avoid these foods until your baby is older. If your child is at high risk for food allergies (has siblings or parents with allergies, etc), consult your child's provider before introducing these foods.

Changes After Starting Solids

When your baby starts eating solid foods, his stools will become more solid, variable in color and will have a stronger odor. Peas and other green vegetables may turn the stool a deep-green color; beets may make stool and/or urine red. If your baby's meals are not strained, you may notice undigested pieces of food in his stools like hulls of peas or corn. All of this is normal!

Items of Caution

-  **Honey:** never add honey to baby's food or serve foods containing honey before age 1. Honey may contain botulism spores that can be harmful.
-  **Citrus fruits and juices:** are highly acidic and can cause painful diaper rashes for some babies.
-  **Cow's milk:** should not be offered before age 1 because it does not meet infants nutritional needs and decreases the absorption of iron in an infant's intestinal tract.
-  **High nitrate vegetables:** include beets, green beans, carrots, squash and spinach. Depending on where they are grown, these vegetables may contain naturally high levels of nitrates which can build up to unsafe levels in infants causing a form of anemia. However, you can safely offer these vegetables (home prepared or commercially jarred) to babies over 6 months of age because they have developed the appropriate stomach acids to handle "normal" nitrate exposure.
-  **Well water:** is the biggest potential source of nitrates in the food supply, particularly well water that has been contaminated by run-off from farms fertilized with nitrates. If you have well water or live in a large farming community, it's a good idea to have your water analyzed by your county's Health Department. For contact information, visit: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/well-water-for-citizens>.

Introducing Cereal

Feeding cereal from a spoon helps your baby develop feeding skills. Putting cereal in a bottle or infant feeder does not teach your baby how to chew and swallow and it can cause choking. Offer cereal from a spoon instead of in a bottle.

When choosing cereals, begin with an iron-fortified, single-grain cereal such as barley or oats. Wheat and mixed grain cereals should be introduced last because they are more likely to cause an allergic reaction.

-  Mix 2 teaspoons dry cereal with breast milk or formula to make a smooth liquid. To start, aim for the consistency of a slightly thickened liquid.
-  Offer it to your baby with a small spoon once a day.
-  Gradually increase cereal to 2-3 tablespoons twice a day.



Introducing Vegetables and Fruits

Plain vegetables and fruits are the most nutritious. Sweet potatoes, green beans, peas, squash, peaches, applesauce, avocado or banana are good choices. Avoid commercially prepared baby foods that contain added salt, fat, sugar, seasonings or other fillers! Read the ingredient list carefully before purchasing baby food.

-  Offer 1-2 tablespoons of pureed or strained vegetables or fruits the first day.
-  Gradually increase to ½ cup or 1 small jar daily.
-  Add only one single-ingredient food at a time. Wait at least 3-4 days before trying a new food to determine if any allergies are present.

If a new food causes a rash, diarrhea, or other problems, discontinue that food until a later time. Try a different food when your baby is back to normal.

What About Juice?

According to the 2017 American Academy of Pediatrics updated policy statement, fruit juice offers no nutritional benefit to children under the age of 1 and **should not be included in their diet**, unless otherwise instructed by your child's primary care provider.

Pasteurized 100% fruit juice, ideally diluted with water, may be offered from a cup for children older than 1, but it should be limited to no more than 4 ounces daily. Children should instead be encouraged to eat whole fruits which have more fiber and nutrients.

Storing Foods

Pour your baby's food into a bowl so that any food left in the jar remains sanitary and can be refrigerated for later use. Discard any unused baby food if you feed your baby straight from the jar.



Do not put any leftovers your baby doesn't finish back in the jar or save them to feed later.

Opened jars of baby food that have been refrigerated should be thrown out after 24 hours.

Homemade Baby Food

With a little planning and a blender, fork, strainer, food processor and/or a baby food grinder, you can make foods for your baby at home. Homemade infant food may help cut food costs and will provide baby with food as nutritious, if not more nutritious, than store-bought baby foods. Making your own baby food will also help baby get used to foods the family eats.

Pureed fruits and vegetables can be prepared from fresh-cooked fruits and vegetables. Use cooked fruits and vegetables without added salt, sugar or fat. Some foods, like ripe bananas or avocados, can be mashed or pureed with a fork and don't need to be pre-cooked. It may be necessary to add some fluid (breast milk, formula, water or cooking water) to the pureed food to make it the right consistency for your baby.



Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables without added sugar or salt may also be pureed and used. When using commercially processed canned or frozen fruits and vegetables, check the ingredient list. Make sure you are not adding extra sugar, salt, fat or other unnecessary additives to your baby's diet.

Some commonly home-prepared fruits for babies include:

- ◆ ripe mashed bananas or avocado
- ◆ applesauce
- ◆ dried prunes (cooked and pureed)
- ◆ fresh pears or peaches in season (soft-cooked and pureed)

Fresh vegetables that can be home-prepared and pureed include:

- ◆ sweet potatoes
- ◆ winter squash
- ◆ peas
- ◆ white potatoes
- ◆ asparagus
- ◆ green or wax beans

Tips for Making Homemade Baby Food

- ◆ **Work under the most sanitary conditions possible.** Wash utensils, bowls, and working areas with hot, soapy water and rinse well.
- ◆ **Peel and thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables.**
- ◆ **Cook foods.** When necessary, boiling them in a small, covered saucepan with a small amount of water until tender. The amount of water is important: the less water used, the more nutrients stay in the food.
- ◆ **Puree food** using a blender, food processor, baby food grinder, spoon or fork. Grind up tough foods.
- ◆ **Test for smoothness** by rubbing a small amount of food between your fingers. Add a liquid such as breast milk, formula, water or fruit juice to achieve desired consistency.
- ◆ **Refrigerator quickly if pureed food is not being eaten immediately.**
- ◆ **Separate baby's food from the rest of the family's before adding seasoning or spices.** Babies need very little, if any, added salt or sugar.

Freezing Homemade Baby Food

To Freeze:

- ◆ Portion pureed food into single-serving sizes. Pour food into paper or silicon cupcake liners or a section of a clean ice cube tray. You can also drop food by spoonfuls onto a cookie sheet and cover with foil. Then place food in freezer to set.
- ◆ Once frozen solid, transfer to a freezer safe container or plastic bag.

To Serve: Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator, in a double boiler, in the microwave (at low setting), or in the plastic bag under cold water. After reheating, stir and check the temperature carefully before serving.

Baby Food Recipes

Bananas Plain and Simple

Ripe bananas may be pureed or mashed with a fork and fed to your baby directly. You may need to add liquid (water, formula or breast milk) to reach the desired consistency. Avocados also work great!



Pureed Fruit Delight

½ cup freshly cooked or canned fruits, without sugar (you can use apples, pears, peaches, nectarines, apricots, cooked dried prunes, etc)
2-4 tsp liquid (water, unsweetened fruit juice, formula or breast milk)

Remove skin and seeds. Press through a sieve or put ingredients in a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Serve or freeze.



Vegetable Medley

(after all vegetables have been successfully tried individually)

½ cup cooked fresh, frozen or canned vegetables, without salt (any combo of potatoes, sweet potatoes, green beans, peas, carrots, etc)
2-4 tsp liquid (water, unsweetened fruit juice, formula or breast milk)

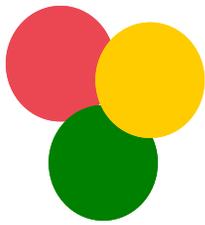
Press vegetable chunks through a sieve or baby food mill. Thin with breast milk, formula or cooking liquid to reach eating consistency. You can also put cooked vegetables and liquid in a blender and puree until smooth. Serve or freeze.



Yummy Fresh Fruit

¾ cup ripe fruit (uncooked peaches, pear, apricots or nectarines)
1 Tbsp unsweetened fruit juice (not citrus)

Remove skin and seeds. Puree ingredients in a baby food mill or blender until smooth. Serve or freeze.

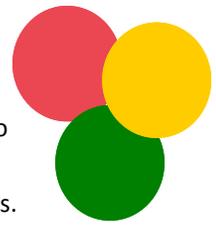


Starting Solids

The AAP recommends that an infant not be started on solid foods until 6 months of age. However, many babies still start on solids around 4-5 months of age.

Talk with your baby's primary care provider about his/her readiness to start solids and what is best.

Age & Stage	
Cereal	<p>Start with single-grain varieties.</p> <p>Wheat and mixed grain cereals should be introduced last because they are more likely to cause an allergic reaction.</p>
Fruits	<p>May be served raw after 8 months old.</p> <p>Bananas and avocados do NOT need to be cooked.</p>
Vegetables	<p>Serve cooked until after 12 months old or when your baby can chew well enough that no choking hazard is present.</p>
Protein & Dairy	<p>Meats can be a great first food for babies, especially breastfed babies because of the high iron and zinc content.</p> <p>Be sure to puree meats well. You may need to thin it with breast milk, formula, water or cooking water.</p>
Breast Milk or Formula	<p>Breast milk or iron-fortified formula should continue to be your baby's main source of nutrition.</p> <p>Feedings should continue as normal.</p>



4-7 Months Old

Introduce one new food every 3-4 days. This will allow you to recognize if an adverse reaction occurs.

Start with single-ingredient, pureed, mashed or strained foods.

Offer 1-2 teaspoons to start, gradually increasing amount as your baby is ready.

Food	Amount per Day
Barley Oat	3-5 tablespoons per day
Apples Applesauce Apricots Avocado Bananas Mango Nectarines Peaches Pears Papaya Plums Prunes Pumpkin	1-2 tablespoons, 1-2 times per day
Butternut Squash Beets Carrots Green Beans Parsnips Peas Spinach Sweet potatoes Yellow Squash Zucchini	1-2 tablespoons, 1-2 times per day
Chicken Turkey Eggs Tofu Plain Yogurt	1-2 tablespoons, 1-2 times per day
Breast milk Iron-fortified formula	24-32 ounces per day

