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# INTRODUCING SOLIDS

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In the beginning 'food' for baby means milk. Whether breast milk or formula, milk remains the most important 'food' until the baby is 12 months of age.

## When should I introduce solids?

All babies are different and develop at their own pace, but as a general guide solids can be introduced at about 6 months of age.

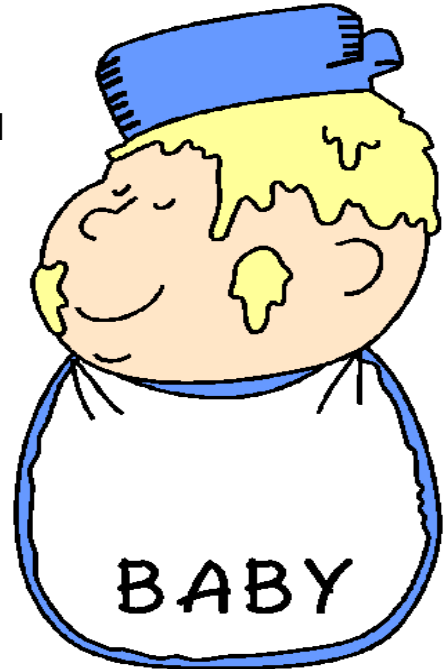
Introducing solids too early can increase the risk of food allergies and choking.

From 6 months your baby will start to need more than just breast milk or formula.

A baby will tell you when they are ready for solids.

They will begin to:-

- ◆ control their tongue.
- ◆ start to sit upright when supported.
- ◆ show an interest in food, watching you eat.
- ◆ have an increased appetite.



## What should I introduce first?

1. Baby cereals - eg. baby rice can be made into a smooth paste with breast milk or milk formula.
2. Puréed or well mashed vegetables-eg. potato, pumpkin, carrots. Then stronger flavoured vegetables such as cauliflower, broccoli or peas.
3. Fruit -eg. well mashed banana, stewed apple, pear, rockmelon, watermelon (without the pips). Introduce fruit after vegetables so that your baby does not get used to sweet foods first.

## How much should my baby eat?

To start with offer small tastes - 1/2 teaspoon of the one food for 4-5 days.

Try each new food separately and in the morning. This gives you the rest of the day to see if baby has any reaction (vomiting, skin rashes, excessive crying, diarrhoea).

If a reaction does occur, it may or may not be due to the food. Try serving the food again in a few weeks.

Don't worry if the baby doesn't swallow very much at first. At this early stage food is given to teach the baby about eating, not for its nutrition.

Babies will let you know when they have had enough by showing less interest or refusing the food.

For the first few months, offer solids after a milk feed.

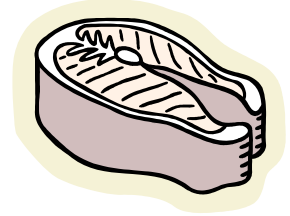


## From six to nine months

**M**ost babies can manage soft lumps soon after starting solids. Encourage them to try mashed or minced foods.

**G**radually offer small amounts of-

- ◆ Tender, well cooked meat from stews, casseroles.
- ◆ Chicken diced or puréed in a blender.
- ◆ Well cooked lean mince.
- ◆ Fish without bones or fatty batter.
- ◆ Baked beans, split peas, lentils (well cooked and mashed).
- ◆ Rice and pasta, cooked.
- ◆ Baby cereals (eg. rice, mixed cereal, muesli) are still best as they are high in iron.
- ◆ Well cooked egg, start with small amount of cooked egg yolk. Introduce egg white later in small amounts.



**S**tart to encourage drinking from a lidded cup at about 7 months (use cooled boiled water, formula or expressed breast milk).



## Over nine months

**M**ost babies are eating mashed food from the family menu as three small meals and in between snacks.

**G**ive babies finger foods to further encourage self feeding.

**S**uitable finger foods-

- ◆ Ripe banana, pear, melon and other soft fruit
- ◆ Lightly stewed or grated apple
- ◆ Partly boiled strips of carrot, potato, pumpkin
- ◆ Large cooked noodles
- ◆ Bread, toast or low salt biscuits
- ◆ Cheese
- ◆ Pieces of cooked meat and chicken
- ◆ Homemade rusks

**B**reast or formula feeds decrease as solids increase.

**B**aby will now need about 3-4 breastfeeds, cups or bottles per day usually in between meals.

Cows milk is not recommended as the main milk drink for babies before 12 months of age. However it can be used in small amounts on cereal, as custard, cheese or yoghurt.

**A**void pieces of raw fruit and vegetables eg. apple, carrot that can easily choke the baby.