



**Child and Adolescent Health Specialists, PC**

*223 Chief Justice Cushing Hwy., Suite 201*

*Cohasset, MA 02025*

*T. 781-383-8380 ♦ F. 781-383-8382*

[www.childhealthspecialists.com](http://www.childhealthspecialists.com)

## INTRODUCTION TO SOLID FOODS

The introduction of solid foods is an exciting time for the whole family. Use the following charts and guidelines to ease both baby and you through meal time. Please note that modifications may be necessary based on your child's personal and family history. For infants with severe eczema or known food allergies, or with a strong family history of allergies, speak with your pediatrician or allergist.

**TIMING:** Most infants are ready to start eating solids at 5-6 months, however, some are ready at 4 months. It is **not** recommended to start solid foods before 4 months of age. Babies will naturally push out food with their tongues in the beginning, but this may also be a sign that baby is not yet ready for solid foods.

Speak with your pediatrician if you have any question about your baby's readiness to start solid foods. **\*\*Do not introduce more than one new food every 4-5 days to allow time to watch for reactions.**

**REACTIONS:** Intolerance or allergies to foods may manifest as a rash, vomiting, diarrhea, swelling, congestion, or difficulty breathing. Call your pediatrician if you think your child is having an allergic reaction. Call 911 if your child is having difficulty breathing, swelling, or other severe allergic reaction.

**PORTIONS:** Start slowly with tablespoon sized portions. Increase as baby becomes more accustomed to solid foods. Portion sizes may vary. If baby opens her mouth like a little bird as the spoon approaches, then she is probably still hungry. If baby purses his lips up and turns away, then he or she is probably full.

Start with feeding once a day. Over the next few months, increase gradually to three meals a day.

### **FOUR TO SIX (4-6) MONTHS OLD**

\*All foods at this age should be a soft, pureed consistency. Use either commercially prepared jarred baby food or cook fruits or vegetables until very soft, then puree.

\*Starting with cereal is often recommended but not required (Rice, barley, or oat). Can be mixed with either formula or breastmilk. Start out with a fairly liquid consistency, then can decrease the amount of liquid as tolerated.

**\*Reminder: No more than one new food every 4-5 days.**



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### **SIX TO EIGHT (6-8) MONTHS OLD**

- \*All foods at this age should still be a soft, pureed consistency.
- \*Continue to add fruits and vegetables one at a time, monitoring for any adverse reactions
- \*May start to combine foods that baby has tolerated well (ie mixed vegetables or cereal with fruit)
- \*For most infants, it is no longer recommend to delay introducing foods such as eggs, peanut butter, and berries. In fact, scrambled eggs are a great source of protein and an easy first food for infants without teeth!
- \*Juice is **not** recommended under 1 year of age, unless specifically recommended by your pediatrician.
- \*Can introduce a small amount of water in a sippy cup (or open cup) daily
- \*NO honey under 12 months of age.
- \*Avoid anything that baby can choke on: whole grapes, nuts (nut butter is fine), popcorn
- \*If your town water does not contain fluoride, talk to your pediatrician about supplemental fluoride drops

### **EIGHT TO TEN (8-12) MONTHS OLD**

- \* Add more texture and finger foods. Many babies by now will have a couple of teeth and enjoy picking up small, easily chewable foods. At around 9 months start gradually transitioning from pureed foods to finger foods as baby tolerates
  - Examples include: soft, cubed fruit and vegetables (avocado, banana, sweet potato, peas, carrots, etc), cereal such as Cheerios, puffs, pasta, meat or fish cut into bite sized pieces, cheese, yogurt.
- \*Continue to avoid juice unless recommended by your pediatrician
- \*Continue to avoid honey until 1 year of life.

### **OVER TWELVE (12+) MONTHS OLD**

- \* Baby will continue to enjoy trying table foods.
- \*If not already done, introduce sippy cup or open cup and gradually wean from bottle
- \*Most babies can now transition from formula or breastmilk to whole milk. Baby should have WHOLE milk, rather than lower fat milk, until age 2 in order to promote brain growth and maturation. Exceptions include babies with milk protein allergies, some premature babies, and infant with certain medical problems. Talk to your pediatrician to determine if your baby is ready for whole milk.
- \* Infants 12 months and older may now have honey.
- \* Remember, family meal times are also great for bonding!



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## **OVER TWENTY-FOUR (24+) MONTHS**

\*Most toddlers can now switch to lower fat milk if desired

### **!!! CAUTION REGARDING CHOKING HAZARDS !!!**

Choking is a serious event that may result in death. It is also preventable. Do not feed children under 4 years old, any round firm food unless it is cut up into pieces less than ½ inch. Infants and young children often do not chew their food well and may try to swallow it whole. Have your child sit while eating and try to teach them to chew their food slowly and well. The following foods are common choking hazards:

- Popcorn
- Peanuts, nuts
- Raw veggies such as whole carrots (carrot curls are better)
- Hot dogs (better if cut length-wise and in small pieces)
- Large pieces of meat like steak that may be difficult to chew
- Large chunks of cheese
- Small, round foods like grapes or cherry tomatoes (better if cut into quarters)
- Goosey or sticky candy, such as chewing gum, jelly beans, or marshmallows
- Large dollops of peanut butter

Other choking hazards include:

- Balloons
- Buttons
- Small batteries
- Small balls, such as super balls, ping pong balls or marbles
- Toys with small parts
- Coins

For more details on starting solid foods and children's nutrition go to [www.Healthychildren.org](http://www.Healthychildren.org).

Choose Ages and Stages then Feeding & Nutrition

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Switching-To-Solid-Foods.aspx>