

Introducing Solid Foods

By Dr. Meghan Macdonald



The Infant Feeding Joint Working Group recommends exclusive breastfeeding (with vitamin D supplementation of 400IU/day) for the first six months. At six months, solid foods should be introduced with continued breastfeeding for up to 2 years and beyond.

When is your baby ready?

- Hungrier than usual
- Sitting up with support
- Able to fold food in his/her mouth
- Interested when others are eating
- Opens mouth when food is offered
- Can indicate when he/she is not hungry (turning head away, leaning back)

What foods should be introduced first?

- Iron-rich foods should be introduced first
 - Meat, poultry, cooked egg yolk, well-cooked legumes
 - Iron-fortified cereal

How to stage new foods

- Introduce new foods one at a time, waiting about 2-3 days before trying another.
- Do not delay any food beyond six months, such as eggs, peanuts, or fish, as a means to prevent the development of allergies.
- Offer lumpy textures no later than 9 months. Progress towards a variety of textures from modified family foods by 1 year of age.

How much food should I offer?

- Always follow your baby's cues
- Start with a teaspoon or two. Offer food 2-3 times per day to begin with, increasing up to 5 times per day by 12 months.
- Remember some babies need to be exposed to the same food 10 or more times before trying it. Don't give up!
- Never trick or coax your baby to eat more than he/she desires. Babies who follow their hunger cues will be less likely to overeat later in life.

What foods should my baby not eat?

- No sugary foods or drinks (including juice)
- No honey until 1 year

General tips

- Promote finger foods to encourage self-feeding.
- Encourage use of an open cup, initially with help.
- To prevent choking, avoid offering hard, small and round, or smooth and sticky, solid foods.
- If you plan to introduce cow's milk, delay this until 9-12 months. Limit intake to no more than **500mL** per day.

For more information and to speak with a nutrition professional, call **Dial-A-Dietitian** at:
604-732-9191 (Greater Vancouver) or toll-free at **1-800-667-3438**

References and more reading:

Canadian Paediatric Society: <http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca>

Dietitians of Canada: <http://www.dietitians.ca/>

Ellyn Satter Institute: <http://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/>

Infant Feeding Joint Working Group recommendations: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/infant-nourisson/recom/recom-6-24-months-6-24-mois-eng.php#a6>