

introducing solids to your baby

WHEN IS MY BABY READY FOR SOLID FOODS?

around 6mos



Baby can sit upright with minimal support for the duration of a meal, at least 10 minutes at a time



Baby has good head and neck control to hold head upright and turn head from side to side



Baby is showing interest in foods, including watching you eat, reaching for your foods, and licking lips

WHICH FOODS SHOULD I OFFER?

It's recommended to start with iron-rich food options, as your baby's iron stores start to become depleted around 6 months of age. Your baby's iron needs also drastically increase around 6 months of age. Breastmilk or formula do not have enough iron to support these significantly higher iron requirements, so we have to add in iron-rich foods to support meeting these requirements. Some options to offer include:

**Iron-fortified
infant cereals**

**Well-cooked
eggs**

**Well-cooked meats
or poultry**

**Legumes (beans,
lentils, chickpeas)**

**Well-cooked
fish**

Tofu

WHAT TEXTURES SHOULD I OFFER?

A variety of textures can be introduced when starting solids, which can help your baby to get a balance of nutrients and develop their skills as an independent feeder. You can offer foods that naturally come in different textures, or you can also modify certain foods to change their texture.



Pureed



Mashed



Minced



Lumpy



Finger Foods

If you decide to offer finger foods to your baby, it's important to make sure the food is offered using an age-appropriate shape and cooking method to reduce the risk of choking. This can vary for each food and it can be helpful to speak with a registered dietitian to help guide you through this process.



HOW OFTEN SHOULD I OFFER SOLIDS FOODS

around 6 months?

When you start to introduce solids to your baby, you can begin by offering solid foods 1-2x daily. Each time should include an iron-rich food. You should continue offering breastmilk or formula on cue, including offering before or after solid foods. Between six and nine months of age, you can gradually increase to offering solids 3-5 times daily in addition to breastmilk or formula.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE 6 - 9 MONTHS

TIME OF DAY	AROUND 6 MONTHS	6 TO 9 MONTHS
Early Morning	Breastmilk / Formula	Breastmilk / Formula
Morning	Breastmilk / Formula Iron-fortified infant cereal mixed with breastmilk	Breastmilk / Formula Iron-fortified infant cereal with fruit puree or finger food
Snack	Breastmilk / Formula	Breastmilk / Formula Toast strips with thinly spread nut butter
Noon	Breastmilk / Formula	Breastmilk / Formula Egg omelet strips with vegetable or fruit
Snack	Breastmilk / Formula	Breastmilk / Formula
Evening	Breastmilk / Formula Meat or meat alternatives pureed or finger foods	Breastmilk / Formula Meat or meat alternatives with vegetable and grain
Snack	Breastmilk / Formula	Breastmilk / Formula Greek yogurt with fruit puree or finger foods

WHAT ABOUT COMMON ALLERGENS?

Certain foods are more likely to cause an allergic reaction than others. Introducing common allergens early on around 6 months of age can actually help to reduce the likelihood that your child develops a food allergy. Once your baby has started eating solid foods around 6 months of age, you can begin offering common food allergens. Common food allergens include:

Eggs Milk Wheat Peanuts Tree Nuts Fish Soy Sesame Mustard



It's recommended to offer no more than one common allergen per day and wait at least 2 days before introducing another. This will help to know what food caused a reaction should your baby show signs of an allergy.



Make sure to spoon feed your baby when introducing allergens rather than allowing them to self-feed. This is because food smeared on a baby's skin may cause skin irritation that can be mistaken for allergy.



Signs of allergy could include rash, hives, swelling, vomiting or breathing changes. If a reaction is to occur, most often these symptoms will happen within 2 hours but can arise up to 24 hours later.



Stop feeding a food if you think it causes any of these symptoms and talk to your baby's health care provider before offering it again to discuss a safe way to proceed. Call 911 if your baby is having trouble breathing.



Once an allergen has been introduced with no reaction, it's important to continue to offer it regularly to help prevent any food allergy from developing to this food. It should be offered to your baby 2-3 times per week.



It's a good idea to track your progress on which common allergen foods you've introduced to your baby. Use a journal or your notes app to keep track.



**SET
FHT**

South East Toronto
Family Health Team

