

Transition to Solids

When is Baby Ready for Solids?

Most babies are ready to try solids around 6 months. Some babies are ready as early as 4 months or as late as 7 months but you will know when your baby is ready because they will:

- sit up without support
- grab things and hold items
- guide objects to mouths

Sometimes baby's activities make us think they are ready earlier - these are "false cues." These may be a part of baby's development, but not a cue to begin solids.

False Cues:

- Watching others eat
- Waking at night
- Slow weight gain
- Lip smacking
- Not falling asleep while nursing or feeding

How Do You Start Feeding Solids?

- Continue breastfeeding and/or iron-fortified formula; offer first bites between breastfeeding or bottles.
- Baby begins by joining the family for meals. Keep screens off to help baby enjoy the family and the meal.
- In the beginning, this is more about exploring foods. Do not worry if baby does not eat much in the beginning.
- Use small bites and soft foods to begin.
- **Let baby feed herself – let her decide how much she wants to eat and how quickly.**
- Offer water with solids once baby is 6 months and older - offer in a sippy cup to begin.

How to Continue?

- Offer a new food every other day. Make foods different colors, textures, smells, or add herbs.
- Offer foods that were spit out other days; remember new flavors sometimes take 5-13 tries before baby likes them.
- Gradually, move baby from sippy cup to a regular cup by age 12-18 months.

Where?

- At the table with a high chair or booster seat. But remember a mess is to be expected.
- Baby's exploration is so good for their development but may not be for your carpeted floor. Put an old shower curtain or towel down.



What?

- **Soft, cooked vegetables** – carrots, broccoli (soft enough to eat, but not too soft, so that they crumble).
- **Roasted peeled vegetables** - potato wedges, sweet potato and carrots.
- **Ripe, soft fresh fruit** - pear, banana, mango, melon and avocado.
- **Meat and Fish** – avoid lumps, but make it easy enough for baby to pick up and chew. Typically, baby will suck on meat and spit out remainder until they are older and can chew better.
- **Beans** – rinse soft beans and mash them with a fork to get rid of larger lumps.

What About Choking?

- It is important to know that choking is different from gagging. Gagging is baby's normal safety response preventing the food from moving too far back inside the throat.
- Choking is when the food is obstructing baby's airway and baby is starting to look panicked, has stopped making sounds, and may be turning blue.
- To avoid or respond to choking, be sure that:
 - babies are always sitting up and not leaning when they are eating.
 - foods are soft and in small bites.
 - if baby is choking, follow standard infant CPR practices.

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