

## **GUIDE TO STARTING SOLID FOODS**

How to know if your baby is ready for solids: Age is between 4-6 months, baby can hold head steadily while sitting, baby sometimes open mouth when food approaches, baby appears interested in food while others eat, and the tongue pushing reflex disappears.

### **Age 4-6 Months**

Most calories are still from breast or bottle. For most babies, it does not matter what the first solid foods are. Traditionally, single grain cereals are introduced first (for babies and iron fortified). Begin by introducing single grain cereal off a spoon once a day. Mix ½ tsp of dry cereal with breast milk or formula to make it like thin gravy. Please note that it is not recommended to add cereal to the bottle unless you have been instructed to do so for medical reasons. Make sure your baby is properly secured in a highchair during feedings. As the baby tolerates this you may gradually increase the amount and thickness of cereal feedings. The feedings will increase to 4-6 tsp twice daily. Try all the single grain cereals with the baby (rice, barley, and oat). Start prepared strained baby food vegetables (carrots, squash, sweet potato, and then the greens) and fruit (applesauce, bananas, peaches, and pears) at 1-2 tsp gradually increase to 4-8 Tbsp daily. There are no strict rules about what order to give different foods.

### **Age 6-9 Months**

You may introduce cooked pureed meat at 6 months, starting with white meat like chicken and turkey and then red meat. Meats are a source of more easily absorbed iron and zinc. Your baby should be eating 2 to 3 meals per day consisting of cereal, fruit, vegetable, and meat in addition to breast milk or formula. Your baby will probably be ready to increase the variety and texture of the feedings. Remember to wait 3-5 days in between starting any new food. Introduce a cup with water. Juice has zero nutritional value and is not a daily requirement. There is no evidence waiting to introduce soft, allergy-causing foods, such as eggs, peanuts, or fish beyond 6 months prevents food allergy.

**Daily Requirements** are as follows for an average child:

- Breast milk/formula 24-32 oz.
- Fruits and vegetables 2 ox. Of each (or 4 Tbsp of each)
- Dry Cereal 8 Tbsp (1 oz.)
- Meat/Poultry ½ oz. (or 1 Tbsp)

### **Age 9-12 Months**

Chopped table food, well cooked vegetables, and other soft lumpy foods may be introduced. Babies use their gums and tongue to mash up the lumps, so it is OK if they do not have teeth yet. Make sure the food item is not a choking hazard.

### **Age 12 Months:**

Transition your baby to whole milk (not low fat or skim milk). Eliminate bottles by 15 months of age, the latest.

Age 1 to 2 Years:

**Daily Requirements based on 1000 calories a day or an average child include:**

- Whole Milk 20-24 oz. (some of it can be substituted with yogurt or cheese)
- Fruits 8 oz.
- Vegetables 8 oz.
- Grains 2-3 oz.
- Meats/Beans/Poultry 2 oz.

Foods that are a choking hazard should be avoided. Some examples are as follows: meats, cheese or peanut butter in chunks, hot dogs or hot dog coins, whole grapes or whole cherry tomatoes, nuts and seeds, raw fruit or vegetable cut into sticks or large pieces. Candy, popcorn, and gum are not recommended. Watch for cues that your child has had enough to eat. Do not overfeed.

*Reference:*

- [\*American Academy of Pediatrics, Starting Solid Foods, brochure, 2008\*](#)
- [\*My Pyramid\*](#)
- [\*Healthy Children\*](#)
- [\*What to Fed Your Child, Tanya Altmann, MD\*](#)
- [\*Healthy Children & Two Peas in a Pod Handouts\*](#)