



Introducing Food to your Baby

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Introducing solids to a baby is a major milestone in their life. It is an exciting time for parents but can also be frustrating if your baby is not interested in the foods offered. Babies can show an interest in grabbing at your foods before they are actually interested in eating the food. They may merely be developing their reaching and touching skills and find your food interesting from a tactile perspective. Other cues that a baby may be ready for food are an increased interest in breast or bottle feeding or more frequent waking at night. Remember that breast milk or formula will still be your baby's main source of caloric intake as they start eating solid foods.

Here are some recommendations for the introduction of solids:

1. **Babies have an immature digestive system.** With this in mind it is important to feed babies foods that are easy to digest. Foods should be steamed, boiled, mashed, and/or pureed. If you see pieces of food in your baby's stool it has not been digested. Children under the age of one do not produce very much amylase, the enzyme required to digest grains so do not introduce grains until your baby is at least one year of age.
2. **Quality matters.** Organic, local, grass-fed foods are superior to conventionally grown and raised food. They contain more nutrients and are free of chemicals.
3. **Introduce one food at a time.** It is important to watch for reactions to foods as they are introduced. It may be as subtle as a mild rash or as obvious as diarrhea or vomiting. Offer the same food for 2-5 days before adding a new one. If a food is rejected try introducing it again a few weeks later.
4. **Make the food taste good.** If your baby is breastfed they are used to the flavors from the foods you eat. If they are formula fed it is even more important to develop their taste buds. Introduce a food plain first. If it is rejected try adding spices when you re-introduce.
5. **How often should I feed my baby?** Start feeding your child once a day in the morning. This allows you to watch for any reactions throughout the day. Work up to 2-3 times per day. If your child is really hungry and a little fussy it may not be the time to introduce a new food or feed any solid food. You may want to feed milk or formula first and then offer the solid food. Some babies will do just fine with solid foods when they are hungry. Follow their lead.
6. **Start with egg yolk.** Babies can be offered egg yolk as early as four months. Buy eggs that are from pastured chickens. They contain more omega-3 fats which are important for brain development. Boil the egg for 6 minutes and peel away the white. The white should be avoided as it contains proteins that are hard for a baby to digest and can be a potential allergen. Add sea salt to yolk and spoon feed. After six months frozen liver can be added. Simply grate the liver and allow it to thaw before adding to the yolk.
7. **Vegetables are next.** Start with the orange veggies first, i.e. sweet potato, squash, carrots. If your baby's skin turns orange their liver is having a hard time converting carotenoids to vitamin A. Take a break from the orange vegetables if that happens. After the orange veggies introduce green veggies, i.e. green beans, zucchini, avocado, asparagus, peas.
8. **Advancing the diet.** By 7 months of age you can introduce more foods. Pureed meats or fish offer good sources of protein. Remember that meats must be organic and grass fed.

Beef and venison are easier to digest than chicken. Wild salmon is a good fish choice. Yellow split peas, green split peas and red lentils puree well after being cooked. They should be soaked overnight in water and whey or lemon juice and cooked with small amounts of carminative spices-cardamom, cumin, fennel, and coriander to help reduce gas-producing qualities of the legumes. By 8-9 months of age introduce pureed green leafy vegetables and good quality organic, plain, whole milk yogurt and homemade kefir from raw milk. As your child approaches one year offer small pieces of food and other vegetables such as beets, peppers, and foods like hummus and tahini. At his point your child should be eating 3 small meals a day.

9. **Flavoring the meal.** Spices enhance food and help develop taste buds. As with other foods, observations should be made when introducing herbs to be sure they are not irritating to your baby. Fresh herbs are preferable but dried may be used as well. Some spices to consider are thyme, tarragon, basil, cinnamon, tumeric, oregano, rosemary, ginger, garlic, onion, fennel, dill, etc. Chicken, beef or lamb stock also increases the flavor of food and introduces beneficial enzymes and minerals.
 10. **Cooking with oils.** Fat is essential for a baby's development. Use fats such as olive oil, coconut oil, butter, and lard. Avoid oils such as canola, sunflower, safflower, corn or any hydrogenated oils.
 11. **Water.** Once your child is eating solid foods offer water throughout the day.
 12. **Milk, yes or no?** After the age of one raw milk can be introduced. Raw milk contains beneficial probiotics and enzymes and important vitamins and minerals.
 13. **What not to feed.** There are many foods that should not be offered to a baby, especially those that can be mucus producing:
 - Processed dairy – pasteurized dairy is devoid of enzymes that make dairy digestible and is mucous producing.
 - Soy – acts as a phytoestrogen and inhibits the thyroid's ability to uptake minerals.
 - Citrus – too acidic.
 - Grains, cereals, flour – Whole grains should only be introduced after one year of age when amylase production has increased. Most grains should be soaked before cooking to reduce phytic acid which inhibits enzymes and chelates minerals. Examples of good grain choices are brown rice, quinoa, millet, and barley. Cereals and flours are over-processed with very little nutritional value, break down readily and act as simple sugars in the body. Processed grains are often mucous producing and cause constipation.
- Juice
White sugar and other sugar products and substitutes
Fried foods
Processed foods
Raw fruits and raw vegetables – while fruits are a health food group, they are healthier for your child as a snack every now and then rather than as a meal or as a major component of their diet. Offer fruits that are organic and use the fruits that are in season.
14. **Supplements.** Probiotics are often recommended after birth, especially if the baby was delivered via cesarean section. High vitamin cod liver oil can be introduced at four months. A baby stores up vitamin D it takes from their mother. If the mother is deficient vitamin D supplementation should be given to the mother and considered for the baby