



Here Comes the Airplane

Introducing solids between 4-6 months

A time of celebration: Baby's first taste of solid food!

Tasting solid foods for the first time is an exciting experience for a baby. New textures. New flavors. New skills to learn and celebrate! Every baby is different, so take it slowly and enjoy helping them learn to eat. The following questions and answers may help make this first experience with food a happy one.

How do I know if my baby is ready for solids?

Most babies are ready for solids between 4-6 months. They should also be able to sit up with support, control their head and neck, bring objects to their mouth, and swallow food instead of pushing it out. **It's NOT recommended to feed your baby solid food before they are 4 months of age.**

What's the first food a baby should eat?

Research shows that babies can be started on a number of different single-ingredient foods, including pureed meats, vegetables and fruit. Offering foods that provide iron and zinc each day is important. These include iron-fortified infant cereals such as oatmeal, or pureed meats (especially beef).

Should I put baby food in a bottle?

Baby food, including cereal, should always be given with a small spoon—never in a bottle. Giving food in a bottle can cause your baby to choke. Plus, eating with a spoon is more exciting!

How much and how often should I feed my baby?

Offer small amounts of single-ingredient baby food with a spoon 1-2 times a day. Follow your baby's cues and stop feeding your baby if they turn their head away from the spoon or refuse to open their mouth. It's okay if more food ends up on their tray than in their stomach! This stage is all about giving your baby a taste of foods they'll learn to enjoy. Breastmilk or formula should still be your baby's main source of nutrition until age 1.

How do I make my baby's cereal?

Mix about 2-4 tablespoons of single-ingredient cereal with breastmilk or iron-fortified formula until it has the consistency of thin gravy. Once your baby is tolerating other foods, try mixing in pureed fruits, vegetables, and meats.

How do I introduce different foods to my baby? And what about allergies?

Offer a single food at a time. Wait 3-5 days before offering a new single-ingredient food to watch for signs of intolerance or allergy.

The most obvious signs of food allergies are rashes, itching, and/or redness. Call your doctor if you see any of these signs on your baby's skin.

More severe allergic reactions include lip or tongue swelling, vomiting, hives over the body, or difficulty breathing. Call 9-1-1 if your baby has any of these symptoms.

What if my baby doesn't like baby food?

Eating is a fun and exciting adventure for babies, but it can take a while for them to get used to it. Continue offering small amounts—about half a teaspoon—on the tip of your baby's tongue for them to taste and gradually get used to this new feeling.

SAMPLE MEALS

Morning Snack

1-2 tablespoons infant cereal (mixed with breastmilk or iron-fortified formula) or pureed fruit or vegetable.

Afternoon Snack

1-2 tablespoons pureed meat

Four- to six-month-olds still mostly rely on breastmilk or formula to grow and develop. At this age, breastfed babies usually nurse 6-8 or more times a day. Formula-fed babies drink about 30 ounces a day.

