

EAT EARLY. EAT OFTEN.

Help prevent food allergy in your baby

Feed your baby the foods that most commonly cause food allergy by around 6 months of age. If your baby is high risk for developing food allergy, introduction can start earlier than 6 months, but not before 4 months.

The most common causes of food allergy in babies are cow's milk, egg, peanut, tree nuts, sesame, fish, soy and wheat.

To help stop food allergy from developing, the Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology and the Canadian Paediatric Society recommend that these common food allergens, in particular cooked egg and peanut, are fed early to babies who are at high risk of developing food allergy.

High-risk babies have eczema or pre-existing food allergy, or an immediate family member with eczema, food allergy, asthma or hay fever. Testing for food allergy before introducing allergenic foods is not required.

This guidance will not stop all babies from developing food allergy, but it has been shown to drop the rates of food allergy quite substantially.



Remember,
once your baby has eaten the food, and if there is no allergic reaction, it's very important to keep feeding that food to your baby about 2-3 times/week to help prevent the development of a food allergy.



HOW TO FEED YOUR BABY EARLY

Your baby must be developmentally ready for solid foods.

They should be able to sit up well without support, in addition to showing other signs of readiness. Visit caringforkids.cps.ca for more information.



Give your baby allergenic foods for the first time at home.

Make sure it is a time when they will be awake for two hours afterwards in case allergy symptoms develop.



Feeding allergenic foods for the first time in most infants is safe.

It rarely causes a serious allergic reaction.



You can feed your baby one food at a time to gauge reaction. This can be done on successive days.

Although, some allergists advise that mixtures of these foods (e.g. mixed tree nut butter) can be given.



The food should have a smooth consistency.

This helps to make sure your baby isn't at risk of choking.



Feed your baby, rather than having them self-feed (baby-led weaning).

This is because food smeared on a baby's skin may cause skin irritation that can be mistaken for allergy.



If a cow's milk-based formula has been introduced, feed it regularly (as little as 2 teaspoons daily) to help maintain tolerance.



If certain allergens, like crustaceans and molluscs, are not a part of your family's normal diet, you may not need to feed them early.



Remember,

the risk of a baby having a severe reaction the first time they eat a food is extremely low.

WATCH FOR SIGNS OF AN ALLERGIC REACTION

-  Allergy symptoms usually develop within minutes of eating a food but can occur up to 2 hours after ingestion.
-  Symptoms can be mild such as hives. Note that redness around the mouth may be due to skin irritation rather than allergy.
-  More severe symptoms can include:

-  Swelling of the lips, eyes, or face
-  Vomiting
-  Widespread hives on the body
-  Breathing symptoms such as repetitive cough, wheeze, or any difficulty breathing
-  A change in skin colour (pale, blue)
-  Sudden tiredness/lethargy/seeming limp

There can also be behavioural changes such as irritability, inconsolable crying or clinging to a caregiver.



Remember, if there are severe allergy symptoms, seek immediate medical attention/call 911. If the junior dose of an epinephrine auto-injector is on hand, it should be administered to an infant who is having an anaphylactic reaction.

RECIPES

Peanut variations can be made for tree nuts and sesame



ingredients

- Peanut



Whole peanuts are a choking hazard and should not be given to children under 4.

tips

Use a similar type of recipe for tree nuts, sesame (e.g. tahini, a condiment made from sesame, may be used).

directions

- 1 Take 2 tps of smooth peanut butter and add 2-3 tps of hot water.
- 2 Stir until dissolved and well blended.
- 3 Allow to cool.

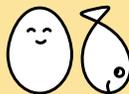
This mixture can be offered alone or added to an already tolerated infant food (e.g. cereal, pureed fruit).

Another option is a peanut puff product (e.g. Bamba), which can be softened for younger infants.

Egg, soy, fish, & other solids

ingredients

- Egg
- Soy (e.g. tofu), fish, other solids



directions

Boil it, puree it, and mix it with a tolerated infant food.

tip

Both the egg white and egg yolk can be served.

Wheat

ingredients

- Wheat-based cereal for infants



directions

Mix in liquid as directed on package.

tip

Serve as is or warm.

Milk



options

- Full-fat, plain yogurt, grated cheese or cottage cheese

tip

Cow's milk should not be introduced before 9-12 months, unless a cow's milk-based formula has already been introduced.

More Tips



Do not place the food on the skin first, as the food may cause an irritant effect that could be misinterpreted as an allergic reaction.



Offer your baby a small amount on the tip of a spoon. Wait 10 minutes. If no symptoms develop, continue to give the rest of the food at your baby's usual pace of eating.



The texture or size of any food should be age-appropriate to prevent choking.

More information



Download more detailed FAQs at foodallergycanada.ca/earlyintro



Watch our early intro webinar at foodallergycanada.ca/webinars



Learn more about the National Food Allergy Action plan at foodallergycanada.ca/nationalplan



For general info on feeding within the first year, visit caringforkids.cps.ca

Speak to your doctor if you have any personal questions.



Email us at info@foodallergycanada.ca



Call us at 1 866 785-5660



Find an allergist at csaci.ca