



INTRODUCING SOLID FOODS



The standard time at which to introduce solid foods to your baby is 4-6 months of age. Here are some guidelines to help you ease your child into experiencing these new textures and flavors:

A. Are your child's stools soft or loose?

If so, you may want to start with cereals to help bulk up his/her stools. The best approach to this is to start with RICE, then introduce OATS, then MIXED cereals which contain wheat and save BARLEY for last. You can mix these cereals with either your breast milk, formula, or sterile water. Through trial and error, your baby will let you know which one he/she likes best.

B. Are your child's stools more firm?

In this case, you may want to start with fruits and vegetables. Most fruits that you find in baby food jars are acceptable (e.g., apples, pears, peaches) and the orange/green vegetables are also good starter choices (e.g., carrots, squash, green peas). If you would rather make your own baby food, make sure the fruits and vegetables are well cleaned, cooked and pureed and not given to the baby raw which could introduce unhealthy bacteria to your baby's system.

Whichever food you choose to start with, there are common guidelines to introducing them:

1. Start out with trying just a few teaspoons of food a day so that your baby can practice the movements needed to get the food to the back of the throat to swallow.
2. Avoid a consistency that is too thick so that your baby does not choke.
3. Introduce the new foods only one at a time. If your baby tolerates the new food and does not develop an allergic reaction to it (e.g. rash, vomiting, diarrhea), then feel free to introduce another new food 3-5 days later. Keep in mind that a rash on your baby's cheeks is common in the beginning—this is from contact with the food since learning to eat is a messy process for your baby.
4. Chicken, mixed in with the vegetables, can be introduced after the age of 6 months, and other meats can be introduced at 8 months.
5. Yogurts can be started at 10 months and soft cheeses at 11 months.
6. At 12 months your child can switch from formula to WHOLE milk.
7. Lastly, keep in mind that there are some foods to avoid in the first year of your baby's life, and these are: honey, peanut products, fish, citrus fruits and egg whites. Egg yolks may be given after 6 months if cooked well and thinned out to a safe consistency.

In just a few months your baby will be enjoying a variety of foods that will provide good nutrition and help him/her grow up strong and healthy!