

Starting Solids

***Remember these are guidelines, not rules written in stone....**

Introduction of solids begins at 4-6 months of age (typically around 4 months for bottle fed babies and closer to 6 months for breastfed babies). Watch for hunger cues to know when the baby is ready to begin solids, such as dissatisfaction after breast/bottle feedings, waking at night, etc. Feed as much as he/she wants to eat in a 10-15 minute period of time followed by the bottle or nursing. Eventually they will let you know when they are finished.

****Feeding should be fun. Never try to force feed a baby.**

****Offer one new food every 4 days. Watch for signs/symptoms of allergic reaction or intolerance to foods such as vomiting, diarrhea, rash or irritability.**

1. The first step is spoon feeding once a day, starting with straight formula or breast milk. Then over the course of the next feeding or two add Rice cereal to the formula in progressively increasing amounts until the mixture is the consistency of stage one baby food. Once they're successful at eating off the spoon and swallowing the food without gagging or choking, it is time to move on to 2 meals a day.
2. Cereal fed in the morning and a vegetable is offered in the evening, or vice versa if you prefer. It is preferable to start vegetables first rather than fruits because some infants have a more difficult time accepting veggies if they've already been offered fruits. Veggies can be offered in any order (green, yellow....whichever you prefer). Once they have tried all the various vegetables and fruits, it is time to move on to 3 meals a day.
3. Now that they are on 3 meals a day, they can try "combo" meals such as turkey and rice or beef and noodles....or you can make your own baby food. A typical schedule might be the following: cereal and fruit for breakfast, fruit and vegetable for lunch and a vegetable and meat for dinner.

FOODS TO AVOID:

No egg until 9 months

No honey, fish, or citrus products until 1 year old

No peanuts/peanut butter until 2 years old, unless family history of peanut allergy, then not until 3 years old

No shellfish or popcorn until 3 years old

FOODS TO TRY:

4 months: single grain, iron fortified cereal (Rice, Oat, Barley)

4-5 months: plain, strained vegetables (DO NOT start with mixed vegetables)

5-6 months: gradually introduce strained fruits after all veggies have been tried

3 oz./day in a cup

6 months: water

7-9 months: strained meats and chicken

8-10 months: soft table foods, yogurt

(Guidelines per the physicians at River's Edge Pediatrics, Inc., Ohio Dietetic Association and Nationwide Children's Hospital)