

## Starting Solid Foods

This is intended as a guideline to help you start solid foods for your infant. This is an exciting and fun time. Make sure to have your cameras ready!!!

When? We recommend starting solid foods at about *5-6 months of age*. Some babies will need to start sooner- we will guide you in those specific and rare cases. Children should be fed in a high chair or in an inclined infant seat.

### The Rules:

- Introduce one new food at a time, adding a new food every 4 days, or about 2 new foods per week.
- Always give solid foods first at the meal, and then finish up with the breast milk/formula. What will happen over time is the baby will adjust their own calorie intake by taking less liquid as they take in more solid foods. This may take several weeks/months.
- Always start the new food in the first half of the day-either for breakfast or lunch-that way if there is an allergic reaction, you will see it.
- Always let the baby stop you-you feed the baby as much as they want. They will usually turn away from the spoon or refuse to open their mouths when they are finished.

5 Months: We start with cereals. These are baby cereals that you can buy at the baby sections of most supermarkets, or at baby stores like Babies R Us and Buy Buy Baby. There is not a particular brand of cereal that we recommend. We recommend buying one box of rice cereal and multiple boxes of oatmeal (plain cereal-not mixed with fruit). This is because some babies don't prefer the taste of rice cereal, and also it can cause some babies to get hard stools. Start with rice cereal first, but after 3-4 days, if you see that your baby is not doing well on it, switch to oatmeal. If they like the rice cereal, and the stools are normal, then proceed to finish the box of the rice, and then switch to oatmeal. You start off with one meal/day, and if the baby takes it well, you can go up to 2 meals/day. This time is really meant to "teach" the baby to eat off of a spoon-some babies take to it very easily from the start, and some need some time to get used to it. **NEVER PUT CEREAL IN THE BOTTLES-IT IS ONLY MEANT TO BE FED WITH A SPOON.** Start off with a small amount of cereal in a bowl and add either breast milk or pre-mixed formula until it becomes a consistency easy to feed with a spoon. Start off with a looser consistency at first, and then make it thicker as time goes on and the baby gets more used to it. There is no need to measure anything.

6 months: Start fruits and vegetables and go up to 3 meals/day. You should continue to give cereal at least 1-2 times/day due to the fact that it has iron fortification. The key to good nutrition is variety-so mix up the meals day to day and meal to meal. For example, you may give cereal and a fruit for breakfast, a vegetable and fruit for lunch, and cereal and a vegetable for dinner. Be creative and have fun. There are no set rules other than the 4 listed above. You can start the fruits/vegetables in any order that you want to. You can start jars of brand name baby foods or you can make your own. Making your own is much simpler and much more economical than you think. All you need is a pot, a steamer, and a blender or food processor.

A good book to help you with this process is:



This book is a good reference due to the *appendix in the back of the book*-it gives you recipes and storing techniques for all of the fruits and vegetables. DO NOT READ THE BOOK FROM COVER TO COVER-IT CONTAINS SOME INFO THAT IS INCORRECT AS TO WHEN YOU CAN START SOME FOODS. Use a serving spoon to place a small amount of the food in your baby's bowl, and use a baby spoon to feed your baby. You can refrigerate any food remaining in the jar for up to 2 days. You can freeze appropriate serving sizes of your homemade foods in ice cube trays and then just defrost them as needed.

#### 8 months-12 months:

Start table foods. You can offer yogurt and cheese (all dairy should be whole fat until 2 years of age). You can now offer meats, beans, pasta, bread, pretty much whatever you are eating short of a few exceptions (see below). This is also the time you can offer "puffs" and cheerios. Everything you offer should be soft and about the size of a pea (that is smaller than the size of the airway so the child may gag but shouldn't choke). Just like everything else, this requires practice. Gradually you should transition from baby foods to table foods as the basis of the meals. We recommend home cooked meals rather than jarred/prepackaged food, and we suggest moving from baby food right to table foods instead of using stage 3 foods. Whole milk is started at 12 months of age, in a cup. Also, as the baby starts taking more and more food over these months, you will see that the amount of breast milk/formula that they take will also start to decrease. The big picture goal is that at a year of age babies should be having about 12-14 ounces of whole milk/day, and they should be having 3 meals with 2 snacks. Stay away from nuts, popcorn, raisins and small, hard foods as they may cause a choking risk.

Food Allergies: If a child is allergic to a food, they usually develop large, red, itchy welts called hives, and they may vomit. You should always have Benadryl around just in case. Due to risk of allergies you should:

- Be careful with berries in the first year of life-several jarred baby foods and baby yogurts make berry flavored products. If there is a family history of allergy to berries, we would hold off on introducing until the baby is at least 1 year of age. Otherwise, just make sure to follow the one new food every 4 day rule.
- *No honey* until *one year* of age.
- *No nuts* of any kind-including *peanut butter* until *at least 18 months of age*. If there is a family history of nut allergy, I would wait until the child is at least 3 years of age to introduce. Soy nut butter is a delicious alternative.
- *No fish or seafood* until *one year* of age. You can start fish at one year of age such as tuna, salmon, etc. Just be cautious of the mercury content of the fish as you did when you were pregnant. You can start shellfish such as shrimp, clams, mussels, etc. after 18 months of age. If there is a family history of fish/shellfish allergy, we recommend introducing after 3 years of age.
- *No eggs* until after *1 year* of age, but things made with eggs, like pancakes, bread and waffles are ok sooner.

Cups: At 6 months of age start introducing a straw cup to the baby with water in it. It may take several weeks for the baby to get the hang of drinking out of the straw cup, but it will happen if you keep offering it consistently. A good cup to start with can be purchased from [www.talktools.net](http://www.talktools.net). Go to "PRODUCTS", then "FEEDING TOOLS", and purchase the "HONEY BEAR WITH FLEX STRAW" (\$7.99). It is a great starting cup because it has a wide straw which is not too long and the body of the cup is soft so you can squeeze it gently and teach the child to drink out of it (almost like a box drink). We do not recommend traditional sippy cups since they are really modified bottles. With a sippy cup, you still have to tip the cup up to suck the fluid out. Long term sippy cup use has shown to cause increased risk of cavities and speech impediments since it can change the shape of the mouth/teeth. Straw cups are the best negotiation since they are the closest you can get to an adult like drinking

cup, that doesn't allow the baby to spill everything around the house. Also, they are very versatile. If you forget the cup at home, you can put a straw in any cup and the baby is able to drink from it. When you go to buy these cups, ignore whatever the age requirement is on them-most say 18 months -3 years old. That is crap since most babies are able to start drinking from a straw cup at about 6 months of age. Your goal is to get them proficient at drinking out of the straw cup by 12 months of age. That is the time you should transition away from bottles all together and start putting whole milk in a cup. The longer you keep the bottles past a year, the harder they are going to be to get rid of, and the more money you are likely to give pediatric dentists!!! *Babies should never sleep with the bottle in their mouth.*



#### Water:

Babies do not need any water until 6 months of age. At 6 months, you should introduce water in a straw cup. The water can be whatever water you drink at home. (Filtered, bottled, etc.) You do not need to buy special water for the baby. Let the baby have as much or as little as they want.

#### Juice:

We NEVER recommend juice except therapeutically to treat constipation. Even though the commercials on TV may tell you otherwise, juice has very little nutrition and is very high in sugar and calories. If you choose to ignore this advice, at least make sure that you are diluting the juice significantly-about 90 % water and 10% juice. Children should never have soda or other sugary drinks such as fruit punch, Kool-aid, lemonade and iced tea. This is true forever. In a perfect nutritional world, where kids don't go to birthday parties, children only need to drink water and milk to be healthy.

#### Dairy:

After 1 year of age, children only need 2-3 servings of calcium/day. That may be a yogurt, slice of cheese or glass of milk. Children should have a maximum of 2 cups (12-14 ounces of milk/day). From 1-2 years of age, children should only have whole fat dairy products. After 2 years of age, all dairy should be reduced to low fat-1% or skim depending on family preference. Most kids get too much dairy. Don't get into the habit of giving your child more milk if they don't eat well. We want kids to eat their calories, not drink them.

#### Organic Foods/Milk?

It is really a personal preference.

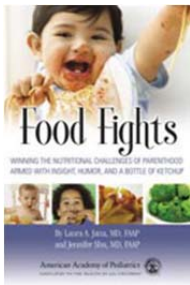
#### Vitamins:

The new recommendations are that all children get 400 IU of Vitamin D starting from the newborn period. All breastfed babies and formula fed babies who are taking in less than 32 ounces per day (which is most formula fed babies) need this supplementation. Either Tri-Vi-Sol or D-Vi-Sol which is made by the Enfamil Company, or Carlson's Infant Vitamin D drops are good sources of this additional Vitamin D. In Nassau County, and some areas of Suffolk County, there is no Fluoride in the water. In Queens, and the rest of New York City, there is Fluoride in the water. If you live in an area where there is no Fluoride in the water, then a multivitamin with Fluoride is recommended for children starting at 6 months of age. We will provide you with a prescription for this

vitamin if needed. Otherwise, as the child grows, any over the counter multivitamin is ok to start if you chose to- just be sure to stay away from “gummy vitamins” since they increase the risk for cavities.

### Behavioral Component of Eating:

Be flexible and relaxed. As babies get older, they usually want to handle some of their own food. This is the way babies learn to feed themselves. Let babies eat the foods of your culture. Try to have “family meal time” in which the entire family eats together. Follow the child’s lead-don’t try to force them to eat. Believe us, kids do not go on hunger strikes-they will eat when they are hungry. Don’t get stressed over feedings. If you look at what a child eats over a week, you will see that it is actually pretty well balanced. Don’t look at it day by day. There is a great book put out by the AAP that really offers parents practical, reality-based strategies for getting kids to eat right.



### Common “Toddler Feeding” pitfalls:

- Don’t let your child play and eat at the same time. Try to have them secured in a chair during meals. We want our kids to recognize “meal times”. You don’t want to be chasing after your toddler to put a bite of food in his/her mouth. This behavior of eating while playing may also increase the child’s risks of choking.
- Don’t make your child multiple food choices at every meal-in other words, don’t be your toddlers “Short order cook”. Make one thing, and if they don’t want to eat it, let them go hungry. They will make up for it at the next meal.
- Don’t give milk or other caloric liquids if the child refuses to eat. Try to give milk after the child eats to encourage them to eat foods.
- Don’t let your child have dessert or snacks if they don’t eat at a meal.
- Even if you are eating yourself up inside over what or how much your child is willing to eat, never let them see it!!! Toddlers are very manipulative and they want your attention. If you give them any attention for not eating, they will purposely not eat to get your attention.
- Feeding a Toddler is really a power struggle. Let them *think* they are in control, and they will eat better.
- Remember, very few toddlers eat a variety of vegetables. Hide them where you can (pureed soups always seem to be a good vehicle for this) and don’t worry. It will improve as the child gets older.
- Don’t buy “Junk food” and “Fast Foods” for your kids. They will get used to whatever you get them used to. Again, they will be exposed to this stuff at birthday parties and at other people’s homes. Let it be “special occasion” types of food and keep it out of your home.

Bon Appetit.....

All products available at: Franwin Pharmacy 127 Mineola Blvd. Mineola, NY 11501

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Hours: M-F 9-6 Sa 9-3