

SEAHURST PEDIATRICS
16233 Sylvester Rd. SW #230
Burien, WA
242-7822

SOLID (STRAINED) FOODS

INTRODUCTION TO SOLIDS

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the introduction of solids between the ages of 4 and 6 months. There are many ways of doing this, and this format just represents one way and should be used as a list of suggestions, not a rule.

The best time to begin using a spoon to feed your child is when your baby can sit with some support and move his head to participate in the feeding process. This time is usually between 4 and 6 months of age. Breast milk and commercial formulas meet all of your nutritional needs until 4 to 6 months of age. Introducing strained foods earlier just makes feeding more complicated. Research has shown that in most cases solid foods won't help your baby sleep through the night. The only exceptions are those few breast-fed babies who are not getting enough calories or gaining enough weight.

If your baby does not seem interested in the solids when you first start, wait a week or so and try again. If baby does not like a particular food, go on the next one and you can always return to this food later.

Wait 2-3 days between introduction of new foods, and reactions such as vomiting, diarrhea or skin rash can be easily identified. You can prepare your own foods, but do not add any salt or sugar.

Rice cereal (Gerber, etc) – 1-2 tablespoons of the powder mixed with breast milk or formula to form a thick paste – give this morning and evening for about one week to get your baby used to solids. You may increase the quantity and give the baby as much as he/she wants.

Next you could introduce fruits or yellow vegetables such as:

Applesauce	Yellow Squash
Banana	Carrots
Pears	Yams
Peaches	Sweet Potato
Plums	Regular Potato

The fruits and vegetables can be prepared in advance by steaming or cooking them, and then pureeing them in a blender. Put the puree in an ice cube tray and freeze for later use. One or two cubes usually would be enough for a meal or they may be purchased commercially.

You can also give egg yolk - softboiled 3-4 minutes. Separate the white and add the yolk to cereal or vegetables: oatmeal cereal or barley: or apple juice/white grape – diluted with water.

At six months and older, you can now give your baby three solid meals a day – breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Green vegetables can now be introduced – these include:

Squash (winter)	Peas
Beans	Zucchini
Broccoli	Spinach

All prepared in bulk, pureed and frozen or they may be purchased commercially.

Plain yogurt with baby fruits added.

Meats (mostly white) and chicken, turkey, fish, ground beef, etc – ground up and mixed with vegetables.

Mixed cereals. For teething, I recommend mini-bagels found in the frozen section of your grocery store.

TYPES OF SOLID FOOD

Cereals

Cereals are usually the first solid food added to your baby's diet. Generally, these are introduced to formula-fed infants at 4 months of age and to breast-fed infants at 6 months of age.

Cereals should be fed with a small spoon and never given with formula in the baby's bottle. This is because an infant should be taught to differentiate between what he eats and what he drinks.

Start with rice cereal, which is less likely to cause allergies than other cereals. Barley and oatmeal may be tried 2 or 3 weeks later. A mixed cereal should be added to your baby's diet only after each kind of cereal in the mixed cereal has been separately introduced.

Vegetables and fruit

Strained or pureed vegetables and fruits are the next solid foods introduced to your baby. The order in which you add vegetables and fruits to your baby's diet is not important. However, you should introduce only one new food at a time and no more than three new foods per week.

Meat and protein alternatives

By 7 to 8 months of age your baby should be ready for strained or pureed meats and protein alternatives (such as beans, peas, lentils, cottage cheese, and yogurt).

Possibly allergenic foods

Egg whites, wheat, peanut butter, fish and orange juice may be more likely to cause allergies than other solid foods, but this is controversial. Avoid adding these foods to your baby's diet until 1 year of age, especially if your infant has other allergies.

SPOON FEEDING

Begin feeding your baby with a spoon at 4 to 6 months of age. Place food on the middle of the tongue. If you place it front, your child will probably push it back at you. Some infants get off to a better start if you place the spoon between their lips and let them suck off the food.

Some children constantly bat at the spoon or try to hold it while you are trying to feed them. These children need to be distracted with finger foods or given another spoon to hold.

By the time they are 1 year old, most children want to try to feed themselves and can do so with finger foods. By 15 to 18 months of age, most children can feed themselves with a spoon and no longer need a parent's help to eat.

FINGER FOODS

Finger foods are small, bite-size pieces of soft foods. They can be introduced between 9 and 10 months of age or whenever your child develops a pincer grip.

Most babies love to feed themselves. Since most babies will not be able to feed themselves with a spoon until 15 months of age, finger foods keep them actively involved in the feeding process.

Good finger foods are dry cereals (Cheerios, Rice Krispies, etc.), slices of cheese, pieces of scrambled eggs, slices of canned fruit (peaches, pears or pineapple), slices of soft fresh fruits (especially bananas), crackers, cookies and breads.

SNACKS

Once your baby goes to three meals a day, or eats at 5-hour intervals, he may need small snacks to tide him over between meals. Most babies begin this pattern between 6 and 9 months of age. The midmorning and mid-afternoon snack should be a nutritious, non-milk food. Fruits and dry cereals are recommended. If your child is not hungry at mealtime, cut back on the snacks or eliminate them.

TABLE FOODS

Your child should be eating the same meals you eat by approximately 1 year of age. This assumes that your diet is well balanced and that you carefully dice any foods that would be difficult for your baby to chew. Avoid foods that he could choke on such as raw carrots, candy, peanuts or other nuts, and popcorn.

IRON-RICH FOODS

Throughout our lives we need iron in our diet to prevent anemia. Certain foods are especially good sources of iron. Red meats, fish, and poultry are best. Some young children will only eat lunch meats, and the low-fat ones are fine. Adequate iron is also found in iron-enriched cereals, beans of all types, egg yolks, peanut butter, raisins, prune juice, sweet potatoes and spinach.

VITAMINS

Added vitamins are not necessary after your child is 1 year old and is eating a balanced diet. If he's a picky eater, give him one chewable vitamin pill a week.