

Feeding

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the introduction of solid foods between the ages of four and six months, depending on the individual baby. When starting solids, new foods should be introduced slowly to look for adverse reactions. A new food may be given every three days. Combinations of all foods previously given without adverse reactions are allowed. Single ingredient foods are best. Babies do not need desserts or other foods with added sugar.

Cereals

Begin with rice, 1-2 tablespoons mixed as directed on the package. Feed with a spoon, do not put in the bottle. Start with once a day and gradually increase to A.M. and P.M. feedings. Oatmeal and barley may be added, but avoid wheat until after one year.

Fruits

Fruits may be started following the introduction of cereal. Begin with applesauce, bananas, pears, etc., adding a new variety every 3 days. Fruits may be mixed into the cereal. Avoid citrus and fresh berries until after one year.

Vegetables

Following fruits, vegetables are usually introduced at the noon time meal and may be given at dinner also. Yellow vegetables are generally recommended before green. Start with approximately 2 tablespoons and gradually increase. In general, babies will stop eating when they are full.

Meats

Meats may be added at approximately 8 months of age. Chicken or turkey should be introduced first. Beef or ham may be offered occasionally if desired. Many babies do not initially like the taste of meat. It may be mixed with their food and is generally tolerated well. At this time egg yolk may also be introduced, but egg white is very allergenic and should be avoided until after one year.

Juices

Juices are of limited nutritional value, but may be used in small amounts to quench thirst. Dilute all juices with ½ water. Begin with apple juice, followed by grape and cranberry (these are not necessary and stain excessively). Avoid citrus (orange, grapefruits, etc.) until after one year.

Milk

Breast milk or formula should be continued until one year of age. Solids should be given first and followed by formula or breast milk. The amount of milk consumed will generally decrease with the introduction of solids. At 5-6 months of age babies will consume 28-32 ounces of milk and at 7-12 months of age may be down to 16-24 ounces.

Junior (or Chunky) Foods

At nine months of age soft table or junior foods may be introduced, gradually increasing the texture. With the addition of new textures, observe your baby closely for choking. Avoid preparing table foods with excessive salt and other additives.

Finger Foods

Be sure to use only soft foods cut in small pieces to void choking. Choking is the most dangerous concern of feeding at this age. Please avoid airway-sized foods such as raisins, nuts, popcorn, hotdogs, hard candies, cheerios, etc.

Common Concerns

Amount

A baby's nutritional needs vary from day to day, and his appetite may wax and wane. As long as your baby is growing adequately there is no need to be overly concerned about the amount taken or strict guidelines for instructions.

Bowel Movements

With the addition of new substances and textures, the stools will change color, texture, amount and frequency.