



Transition to Solid Food Tips

What solid foods to introduce:

Continue feeding your baby breast milk or formula as usual. Then:

Start with baby cereal. Mix 1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) of a single-grain, iron-fortified baby cereal with 4 to 5 tablespoons (60 to 75 milliliters) of breast milk or formula. Many parents start with rice cereal. Even if the cereal barely thickens the liquid, resist the temptation to serve it from a bottle. Instead, help your baby sit upright and offer the cereal with a small spoon once or twice a day. Once your baby gets the hang of swallowing runny cereal, mix it with less liquid. For variety, you might offer single-grain oatmeal or barley cereals. Keep in mind that some babies eat cereal with gusto right from the start. Others are less enthusiastic. Be patient and keep trying.

Add pureed meat, vegetables and fruits. Once your baby masters cereal, gradually introduce pureed meat, vegetables and fruits. Offer single-ingredient foods at first, and wait three to five days between each new food. If your baby has a reaction to a particular food — such as diarrhea, rash or vomiting — you'll know the culprit.

Offer finely chopped finger foods. By ages 8 months to 10 months, most babies can handle small portions of finely chopped finger foods, such as soft fruits, well-cooked pasta, cheese, graham crackers and ground meat. As your baby approaches his or her first birthday, mashed or chopped versions of whatever the rest of the family is eating will become your baby's main fare. Continue to offer breast milk or formula with and between meals.

How to introduce solid foods:

Stay seated. At first, you may feed your baby in an infant seat or propped on your lap. As soon as your baby can sit easily without support, use a highchair with a broad, stable base. Buckle the safety straps, and keep other children from climbing or hanging on to the highchair.

Encourage exploration. Your baby is likely to play with his or her food between bites. Although it's messy, hands-on fun helps fuel your baby's development. Place a dropcloth on the floor so you won't worry about falling food.

Introduce utensils. Offer your baby a spoon to hold while you feed him or her with another spoon. As your baby's dexterity improves, encourage your baby to dip the spoon in food and bring it to his or her mouth.

Offer a cup. Feeding your baby breast milk or formula from a cup at mealtime can help pave the way for weaning from a bottle. By age 9 months, your baby may be able to drink from a cup on his or her own.





Dish individual servings. Your baby may eat just a few spoonfuls of food at a time. If you feed your baby directly from a jar or container, bacteria and saliva from the spoon can quickly spoil any leftovers. Instead, place 1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) of food in a dish. The same goes for finger foods. If your baby finishes the first serving, offer another.

Avoid power struggles. If your baby turns away from a certain food, don't push. Simply try again another time. And again. And again. Repeated exposure can help ensure variety in your baby's diet.

Know when to call it quits. When your baby has had enough to eat, he or she may turn away from the spoon, lean backward, or refuse to open his or her mouth. Don't force extra bites. As long as your baby's growth is on target, you can be confident that he or she is getting enough to eat.

Source: Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/healthy-baby/PR00029>

