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Starting Solid Foods (6 Months)

The AAP recommends breastmilk or formula as the sole source of your baby's nutrition for about 6 months. Starting solid foods is an exciting time for both you and your baby but like any new skill, it takes practice. Be patient and encouraging while remembering to have fun with your baby.

How will I know when my baby is ready for solid food?

You can assess readiness by looking for the following:

- Sits and holds head up without help
- Shows interest by watching eagerly/reaching for food
- Accepts food off spoon without gagging or pushing food out

How do I start and advance solid foods?

Traditionally we start with iron-fortified dry cereal mixed with breast milk, formula, or water. Over time, thicken the cereal. When ready, begin feeding different foods such as vegetables, fruits, and meats. Offer simple foods without adding sugar, salt, etc. Introduce one new food every 3-4 days so that if a reaction occurs, you may identify which food caused the adverse response. Remember it may take 10 or more tries for your baby to accept new foods. Persistence is key!

At each meal recognize when your baby is finished. Cues may be when he/she pushes food away, keeps lips shut, turns head away, or spits food out. Do not urge your baby to eat too much.

Are there any foods to avoid?

In the past, experts thought avoiding high-risk allergy foods would decrease the risk for food allergy (milk, egg, soy, peanut, tree nut, fish, and shell fish). Recently, we've learned there is no benefit in delaying allergic foods and, in fact, we may reduce the risk of developing allergies in high-risk children through early introduction and regular feeding. Discuss this with your physician. If there is no reason to suspect a food allergy, you may introduce more highly-allergenic foods after a few other first foods have been tolerated. Peanut butter may be thinned out with cereal, yogurt, or water. Never give whole peanuts or other foods that are choking hazards. Also, avoid honey and whole cow's milk until your baby is 1 year old.

Providing a wide variety of healthy food options now will help your baby enjoy healthy foods for a lifetime!

