

infant nutrition



INTRODUCING YOUR BABY TO SOLIDS Up until about 6 months of age, your baby will thrive solely on breast milk, or a suitable infant formula. After 6 months your baby may be introduced to solid foods in addition to the milk to ensure that they are getting an adequate supply of nutrients. Some babies may need solids earlier than 6 months so you should check with your Early Childhood Health Centre Nurse about when is the best time to introduce solids for your baby.

STARTING SOLIDS

► **Around 6 Months:** Start your baby on bland, mashed or puree foods first. Try an iron-fortified rice cereal to start with as it has a low risk of allergy. The extra iron from the cereal is also important, as your baby's own iron stores start to run low at about this time. Suggested plan:

WEEK 1 - Rice cereal once per day (1 tablespoon) after breast/formula feed.

WEEK 2 - Offer rice cereal twice per day (1 tablespoon on each occasion).

WEEK 3 - Try cooked puree apple, pear or very ripe mashed banana, once per day (increase amounts until having ¼ cup per day). Remember, try each food for a few days before introducing a new one.

WEEK 4 - Commence puree or fork-mashed vegetables as the 'third' solid meal. Try potato, pumpkin, carrot, peeled zucchini and start with 1-2 teaspoons and increase to 1-2 tablespoons.

► **6-9 Months:** Your baby should now be enjoying 3 'solid' meals or ⅓ to ½ cup of food each meal. 3-4 breastfeeds or formula feeds per day are still needed at this age. Foods to try at this stage should be coarser textured, fork-mashed or finely chopped soft foods and can include:

> **CEREALS AND GRAINS** - pasta, rice, oats and wheat-based cereals. Rusks & pieces of toast are suitable to encourage chewing.

> **FRUIT JUICE** - juices are not necessary and should be limited to 100-200mL of diluted juice/day (70% water). Instead, offer water or formula in a cup to accompany nutritious snacks.

> **FRUIT** - slices of soft fruit such as melon, pear and banana are ideal at this age.

> **VEGETABLES** - a variety of soft cooked vegetables to ensure that your baby is getting a mix of nutrients.

> **MEAT & MEAT ALTERNATIVES** - chicken without skin, finely chopped or minced lean beef and lamb are suitable from 6-8 months. Soft, mashed, cooked lentils; beans and tofu as well as steamed fish without bones can also be introduced during this stage.

> **DAIRY & DAIRY ALTERNATIVES** - full fat cow's milk or soymilk can be used on cereal from 9 months. Yoghurts and cooked custards made with dairy or soymilk can be tried. Continue with breast milk or formula as the major drink up to at least 12 months of age.

> **CHEESE** - cottage cheese or grated mild cheese can be given with vegetables or bread. Cheese sticks and slices are popular finger foods.

> **EGGS** - if there is no family history of allergy and your baby has no allergic reaction when tested with a small amount of egg yolk, then it can be introduced from 6-8 months.

> **NUTS** - whole nuts and crunchy nut butters should not be given to children until after 5 years of age as your child could choke on them. Smooth nut butters are generally discouraged until after 12 months due to the high risk of allergy.

► **9-12 Months:** Your baby will now be having 3 solid meals (¾- 1 cup of food per meal) and 3 milk feeds a day. Offer finger foods such as bread crusts, cheese sticks, pieces of banana/pear/melon, fingers of toast. At each meal give:

> A starchy food such as cereal, grain, potato, pasta or bread.

> AND some fruit or vegetables.

> AND a protein food such as dairy, meat, legumes, fish or egg.

Meal suggestions include pasta with sauce, tofu with vegetables, casseroles, vegetable omelettes, breakfast cereal with milk & fruit.

The information contained in this leaflet is correct at the time of publication with every effort made to ensure that it follows the latest nutrition guidelines. Please consult your Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) or doctor for advice on your personal dietary requirements.



WOULD YOU LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

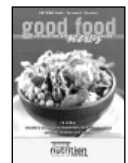
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We invite you to contact us during business hours to:

✓ Receive a copy of our 'READY FOR SOLIDS' leaflet.



✓ Subscribe to our FREE, quarterly food & nutrition newsletter, 'GOOD FOOD NEWS'.



✓ Talk with a qualified dietitian about any nutrition issue of interest to you.

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