

Introduction of Solid Foods to Infants

For the first 6 months of life breast milk is the only food required by most infants. Premature infants normally thrive on breast milk as it provides essential antibodies that protect their immune function and nutrients that optimize growth. A nursing mother just needs to be sure her nutritional needs are being adequately met. Generally, an additional 500 calories daily should be added to the diet to meet the demands of lactation.¹

Until approximately 6 months of age, a baby's digestive tract is not able to adequately digest most foods. The introduction of foods too early may induce food allergies or food sensitivities. Furthermore, it has been conclusively demonstrated in a Finnish study that prolonged exclusive breastfeeding will significantly reduce the incidence of food allergy and intolerance, even in families with a strong tendency to allergy.

Conditions that commonly result from food allergies/sensitivities include upper respiratory infections, ear infections and gastroenteritis. A baby is usually ready for solid foods when s/he is able to sit up and is able to push food away. New foods should be introduced one at a time for a week to see if there is any reactivity.

Symptoms that may indicate reactivity to a food include:

- Rash around mouth or anus
- Hyperactivity or lethargy
- Runny nose
- Skin reactions (hives)
- Infection
- Diarrhea or mucus in stool
- Constipation
- Allergic shiners (dark circles under eyes)
- Redness of face, cheeks
- Ear infections

The following schedule for introducing solid foods to a breast fed infant has been compiled from numerous naturopathic physicians who work extensively with infants and children. Many physicians used to suggest avoiding common allergens such as cow's milk, wheat, oranges, eggs, and chocolate early in the introductory phase (up to the first year). Recent studies (<http://www.aaaai.org/aaaai/media/medialibrary/pdf%20documents/libraries/preventing-allergies-15.pdf>) show some benefit to introduce these foods earlier. It is best to introduce one new food at a time while watching for reactions, i.e. sneezing, runny nose, rash around the mouth, anus or urethra, a change in stool or personality.

It is recommended that vegetables be introduced before fruits, so that infants don't come to expect sweets at their meals. Foods should be rotated every five to six days to minimize sensitization that may occur when the same foods are eaten once or twice daily for five to seven consecutive days.

¹Kajosaari, M.;Saarinen, U., Prophylaxis of atopic disease by six months total food elimination. Evaluation of 135 exclusively breastfed infants of atopic families. Acta. Paed. Scand. (1983) 72, 3, 411-4.

Schedule for Introducing Solid Foods

6-9 months: *Hypoallergenic pureed, mashed foods containing iron; 1-2 Tbs./day. The fruits may be too sweet to introduce at 6 months and are better at 7 ½ to 9 months.*

Carrots	Blackberries	Prunes
Squash	Broccoli	Cherries
Yam	Apricots	Banana
Cauliflower	Jerusalem Artichoke	Grapes
Kiwi	Peaches	Asparagus
Pears	Beets	

9 months: *Food high in zinc and good for immune system; 2-4 Tbs./day. The oatmeal, lima beans, and millet may be difficult to digest.*

Sweet Potato	Cabbage	Oatmeal
Papaya	Blueberries	Rice
String Beans	Nectarines	Squash
Black Strap Molasses	Millet	Quinoa
Artichoke	Apples	

12 months: *Foods high in zinc and bulk; 4-10 Tbs./day.*

Barley	Chard	Peas
Tofu	Parsnips	Beans (well cooked)
Avocado	Egg Yolk	

Goats Milk
Garlic

Onions
Spirulina

18 months: *Foods high in B vitamins and calcium; allow infant to eat amount desired*

Tahini
Kelp
Chicken
Fish

Lamb
Eggplant
Rutabaga
Buckwheat

Salad greens
Rye
Kamut
Lentils

21 months: *Foods high in protein to support growth*

Eggs
Walnuts
Cashew Butter
Brewer's Yeast

Almond Butter
Cornish Hen
Pineapple
Oranges

Turkey
Beef Liver