



# Starting Baby on Solid Foods

**Presented by:**

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# OUTLINE

- Recommendations from WHO and Health Canada about breastfeeding and introduction of complementary foods
- Learn about what and how to feed your baby/ introduce solid foods
- Food Safety
- Questions/discussion
- Group survey and wrap-up





## **WHO and Health Canada recommendations:**

- **Infants are exclusively breastfed for 6 months;** this means no other food or liquid (including water)
- From 6 months or when baby is developmentally ready they should start eating safe and adequate complementary foods
- Continue to breastfeed for up to two years of age or beyond



# SIGNS YOUR BABY MAY BE READY FOR SOLIDS...

Generally babies can do these things by **6 months** of age (but maybe later if your baby was born early):

- **Hold her/his head up**
- **Sit up in high chair and lean forward**
- **Let you know when they are full**
- **Pick up food and try to put it in their mouth**

Babies go through growth spurts around **3 weeks, 6 weeks and 3 months.**

This is **NOT** a sign that infant cereals are needed.



# REASONS TO WAIT UNTIL 6 MONTHS

## **Physiological**

- Infants digestive system and kidneys are immature
- More likely to develop food sensitivities and allergies
- Strong extrusion and gag reflexes
- Not able to sit up or hold up head

## **Nutrition**

- Reduces intake of breast milk
- Nutritionally unnecessary before 6 months of age



# WHY DOES YOUR BABY NEED SOLID FOODS AROUND 6 MONTHS?

- Needs extra iron
- To introduce new flavours and textures



# INTRODUCING SOLID FOODS

- Introduce one new food at a time. New vegetables, fruit, meat and most grains can be introduced daily. Leave more time between new allergenic foods (will discuss more later.)
- Work up to offering solids 3-4 times daily before 9mos and 4-5 times daily after that
- Have baby sit upright (i.e. in highchair). Sit in front of and facing your baby.



# INTRODUCING SOLID FOODS

- Offer when baby is alert. Wait for baby to pay attention & open mouth.
- Look at him/her. Talk to him/her in a kind, encouraging and quiet manner.
- Offer solids from a spoon about a foot away so it can be seen.
- Offer small amounts at first. Follow baby's lead.
- Don't force new foods. Let baby decide how much/what to eat. Stop when baby loses interest.





# INTRODUCING SOLID FOODS

- Feed the way baby wants to eat: a little or a lot, fast or slow.
- Let baby self-feed from the beginning. A mess is OK! More on baby-led weaning/feeding soon.
- Babies need to explore food to get more comfortable with it. This may mean **playing with it, touching it, putting it in their mouth and spitting it out...it's** all part of developing a normal and healthy relationship with food!
- May see a change in bowel movements (colour, odour, consistency and frequency). This is normal.





# WHAT TO START WITH?

At 6 months babies need foods that are **rich in iron** because their body stores of iron are starting to run out. Offer iron-rich foods at least twice daily.

**Iron-rich** foods include:

- Iron-fortified baby cereals -start with single grain (rice, oat)
- Meat such as well-cooked chicken, beef, pork and fish
- Meat alternatives such as beans, lentils, cooked eggs

Good sources of **vitamin C** are also important because vitamin C can help with the absorption of iron from plant foods and grain products made with enriched flour. Foods high in Vitamin C include:

- Many types of vegetables and fruits including strawberries, kiwi, mango, potato, broccoli, peppers, tomato, etc.
- These can be introduced once your baby is used to having a variety of iron-rich foods



# ORDER OF INTRODUCTION

**6 months-** Iron-rich foods (i.e. iron fortified infant cereal + meat & alternatives)

**6+ months-** Vegetables and fruits, grain products, meat & alternatives, dairy products & alternatives (yogurt, cheese)

- Avoid adding sugar or salt to baby's food during the first year
- Choose whole foods that are part of the food groups
  - Fruits and vegetables, grain products, milk and alternatives, meat and alternatives
- Foods like chips, fries, fast food, sweets, processed meats (hot dogs, bologna, deli meat) and dessert can be given less often



# INTRODUCING MORE TEXTURE

- Smooth textures like purees are easiest for baby to eat
- BUT it's very important to help your baby learn how to eat food with more texture so start offering more texture as soon as your baby is able to manage it
- Start by leaving small pieces when you mash baby's food or give them food that is minced (cut in very small pieces) then slowly make the pieces bigger; moist foods are always easier to eat
- Your baby should be offered lumpy foods by the time they are 9mos.

For more info, refer to PH booklet:  
“Feeding your baby and young child”



# EXAMPLES OF FINGER FOODS TO GIVE YOUR BABY

- Soft, ripe, peeled fruit – i.e. pears, cantaloupe, peaches, bananas
  - Strawberries, grapes, etc. should be cut into bite sized pieces
- Cooked vegetable pieces – i.e. cooked carrots, broccoli, sweet potato
- Dry toast strips, bread crusts or unsalted crackers
- Pieces of homemade plain muffins
- Plain o-shaped cereals (not honey-nut)
- Small cheese cubes or grated cheese
- Cooked, tender meat – cut up or ground
- Cooked pasta
- Small tender-cooked beans like black beans or navy beans or larger tender-cooked beans (like kidney beans) cut in half



# BABY-LED WEANING/FEEDING

- What is it?
  - Babies learn to eat by feeding themselves
- When is it NOT safe?
  - Babies who are at higher risk of having a hard time swallowing safely – cleft palate, tongue tie, developmental delay or genetic disorders
  - Babies at risk of anemia should be seen by a health professional (MD, dietitian) – premature babies, babies with low birth weight (<3000g), concerns r/t growth, babies born to an anemic mom, vegan babies, babies with early intro of cow's milk



# BABY-LED FEEDING – Cont'd

- What's Important?
  - Babies should be sitting upright at 90 degrees
  - Foods should be soft enough to mash against the roof of the mouth and about the size of an adult pinkie finger
  - Offer one high-iron food and one high-calorie food at each “meal” along with one easy to eat food (maybe to provide Vitamin C.)
  - You need to allow more time for eating and watch your child closely





# BABY-LED FEEDING – Cont'd

- Last bit of important info:
  - Know the difference between gagging and choking; learn what to do in case of choking (baby first aid highly recommended)
  - For any baby, avoid giving foods that they are more likely to choke on – hard round foods; sticky foods
  - Iron-fortified baby cereal can be spread thickly on a soft food like a toast strip or vegetable; it can also be put onto a spoon and left for the baby to pick up; you can also add baby cereal with iron to recipes like home-made muffins



# INTRODUCING ALLERGENIC FOODS



- There is no evidence that delaying the introduction of allergenic foods past 6 months, will prevent food allergies in **healthy term infants**; you can give allergenic foods after 6 months of age
- For allergenic foods, **allow 2 days** between offering additional new foods until tolerance is assessed; if no reaction on introduction, offer a few times a week to maintain tolerance
- Watch for signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction i.e. hives or rash, vomiting, diarrhea, swelling of mouth or face, blood in stool, itchy watery eyes (runny nose and sneezing)
- High risk babies have a history of allergy or a biological sibling or parent with history of eczema, food allergy, allergic rhinitis or asthma; these infants should have early introduction of allergenic foods as soon as they are ready to start solids.  
**NOT offer before 4mos.**

Do

# INTRODUCING ALLERGENIC FOODS

## ○ **Common allergenic foods:**

- Milk - yogurt
- Wheat – infant cereal
- Tree nuts - smooth almond butter
- Sesame seeds – tahini (sesame seed paste)
- Soy – silken tofu (bean curd)
- Seafood – fish, (shellfish after 1 year)
- Mustard - dry mustard

## ○ **High risk infants r/t egg and peanut allergy:**

infants with *severe eczema* >

pediatrician/allergist for testing and guidance re:  
early introduction (before 6 mos.)



# HOW MUCH?

## ○ **Hungry baby:**

- Put hands in their mouths
- Open their mouth wide for a spoon
- Reaches for food
- Paying close attention to the food
- Upset when food is taken away

## ○ **Full baby:**

- Slow down their eating; losing interest; more playing than eating
- Keep mouth shut; lean back from food; turn their heads when food is near their mouths; spit out food or get upset

## ○ Start with 1 tablespoon and work up



# BEVERAGES

- Only breast milk should be fed until around 6 months or when your baby is ready to start taking solid foods
- **If your baby is doing well with solids and taking foods high in iron 2x daily**, you can offer white homogenized milk (3.25%) starting between 10-12mos. **from an open cup** while continuing to breastfeed
- Lower-fat milk (skim, 1%, 2%), almond milk and soy milk are **not recommended** until **at least 2 years** of age because of their low fat content
- After 6mos. offer small sips of water from an **open cup** to help your baby develop mature feeding skills!
- Juice should be limited in the first year. After the first year, only 4 ounces (1/2 cup) per day.



# BREAST MILK STORAGE

- Store breast milk in containers that have been washed in hot, soapy water and rinsed
- Store in small portions to minimize waste
- Do not fill container – leave room as breast milk expands as it freezes
- Indicate the date that the milk was expressed
- Expect milk to separate during storage – before feeding swirl the container of milk to mix the cream



# BREAST MILK STORAGE

- Milk may be stored in **insulated cooler** with ice packs for up to 24 hours
- Milk may be safely **refrigerated** for up to 5 days (39° F or 4° C), (store milk in back of fridge where temperature is coolest)
- Milk may be stored in the **freezer of your fridge** for 3-6 months (0° F or -18° C)
- Milk may be stored in a **deep freezer** that maintains ideal temperature for 6-12 months (-4° F or -20° C)

\*thaw milk by placing it in a refrigerator over night or in a container under warm running water or in a bowl of warm water

\*milk may be kept in the refrigerator 24 hours after it is thawed



# DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY

## Age 0-6 months

Parent: What

Infant: When, How Much

## Age 9-15 months and beyond

Parent: What, When, Where

Child: How Much, Whether





## HOW YOU FEED YOUR CHILDREN IS AS IMPORTANT AS *WHAT* YOU FEED THEM

- Parents can either play a positive role or negative role in their child's food acceptance (being OK eating a variety of foods) and food regulation (eating as much as they need.)
- Remember that children are very good at regulating their food intake (eating as much as they need.) *Trust them.*
- Many children react negatively to new foods but will usually accept them with time and positive experiences.



# CHILDREN WILL LEARN TO LIKE A VARIETY OF FOODS

- Research tells us that children may taste and remove new foods from their mouth **10 or 15 times** before they swallow it.
- But most parents/caregivers give up after the child has tried a food and refused it 3 times
- Keep offering a variety of foods from all 4 food groups



# FOOD SAFETY

To prevent food-borne illness:

- Do not use honey in the first year (risk of botulism)
- Do not give raw/undercooked eggs
- Wash hands, utensils, cutting surfaces frequently
- Follow “best before” dates
- Wash raw vegetables and fruit well
- Can freeze baby food for 3-6 months; put dates on the food you make and freeze
- If you're interested in more info, you can follow the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) on social media



# FOOD SAFETY

## Warming food and liquids:

- A hot water bath is the safest method.
- Test the temperature before serving.
- Be careful if you use the microwave. Microwaves can heat unevenly and can create hot spots that can burn your baby. Stir warmed food/shake liquids well.
- Sterilize **water, bottles, nipples and caps** until baby is 6 mo.
  - No official safe age to stop sterilizing
- Throw out leftovers at the end of the feeding



# MEAT OR LEGUME PUREE



## Ingredients

- Remove all fat and skin from meat before cooking
- 1 cup (250 ml) of cooked and chopped beef, wild game, chicken, turkey, fish (no bones), legumes or lentils.
- 2 to 4 tbsp (30 to 60 ml) liquid. This can be breast milk, water, or cooking liquid from vegetables/fruit

## Method

1. Place chopped meat or drained legumes/lentils into a blender.
2. Add 2 tbsp (30 ml) of liquid and start to puree. Slowly add another 1 to 2 tbsp. (15 to 30 ml) liquid until you have a smooth puree.
3. Serve baby his/her portion and freeze the remaining puree. See Food Safety Tips, Chill.
4. As baby grows older, increase the texture.



# VEGETABLE AND FRUIT PUREE

## Ingredients

- Fresh or frozen fruit or vegetables

## Method

1. Wash, peel and cut up fresh or frozen vegetables or fruit.
2. Using the stove:
  - Place the vegetable or fruit pieces into a steamer in a small amount of boiling water and simmer until tender.

Using the microwave:

- Place vegetable or fruit in a microwave safe bowl with a small amount of tap water and heat at a high setting until the vegetables are tender, about 3 to 5 minutes.
3. Drain the vegetables or fruit, saving the cooking liquid.
  4. Puree the vegetable or fruit with a small amount of the cooking liquid.
  5. Serve baby his/her portion and freeze the remaining puree.



# FRUIT AND YOGURT SMOOTHIE

## Ingredients

- 1/2 cup (125 ml) frozen fruit
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) plain yogurt\*\*
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) whole fat milk (homogenized / 3.25% MF)

## Method

1. Place all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth.
2. Pour 1/4 cup (60 ml) to 1/2 cup (125 ml) into a cup for baby

## Alternative suggestion

### Frozen Fruit and Yogurt Pops

1. Place 1/4 cup (60 ml) of the fruit and yogurt puree into frozen treat molds and freeze until firm.
2. Serve as a snack.



# SAVING MONEY ON FOOD

- Grow your own veggies
- Avoid wasting food as much as possible
- Don't buy into the baby snack foods; your baby can eat many of the foods you do, just modified to make it easier for them to eat it
- Bulk buy and freeze or preserve the extra
- Shop the sales and go somewhere that you can price match
- Frozen fruit and vegetables are less perishable
- Experiment with plant proteins like beans, lentils and tofu; look for popular recipes





## Resources



→ <https://tworiversfht.ca/programs-services/nutrition/>

→ [regionofwaterloo.ca/ph](http://regionofwaterloo.ca/ph)  
“Feeding your baby and young child”

→ “Trust me, trust my tummy” – Toronto Public Health video on-line

→ Baby-led weaning on-line info <[jessicacoll.com](http://jessicacoll.com)>

→ Book an individual appointment with your Registered Dietitian 519-629-3388 x. 1



# THANK YOU!

*“Building positive eating attitudes  
and behaviours starts at birth ...  
and lasts for a lifetime.”*

*Ellyn Satter, 2004*

