

# Starting Solids

## *When to start*

Most babies are ready for solids when they can hold their head up and show chewing movements (usually 4 to 6 months).

## *First foods - soft and smooth*

- baby rice or infant cereal
- pureed apple, pear, apricot, peach, ripe banana
- pureed kumara, kamo kamo, pumpkin, potato, carrot, marrow, avocado.

Use a blender or push food through a fine sieve.

Use expressed breast milk, formula or water to make the food runny enough for baby to swallow. Although not suitable as the main milk feed for babies before one year, a little cow's milk can be mixed with food from 8 months.

Don't add salt, sugar, honey, butter or cream to baby's food.

Canned or bottled foods made specifically for babies are also nutritious.

## *Milk first - solids to follow*

It is best to try a new food when baby is most relaxed and happy.

Offer solids as a 'top up' after the milk feed.

Try one teaspoon at first, and gradually increase until baby is having a 3 to 4 teaspoon meal. Hold baby or sit in a high chair to feed.

Try one new food every 4 to 5 days. If your baby does not like it the first time, try again with a small amount a few days later.



When baby can sit and is starting to bite (6 to 7 months)  
introduce some finger foods and foods containing iron:

- white toast fingers, rusks. (Avoid high fibre products.)
- finely minced meat and/or egg yolk.

Continue to introduce vegetables, for example puha, watercress,  
yams, taro, courgettes, cauliflower, broccoli.

When baby has good chewing and biting skills (8 to 9 months)  
offer cooked, finely chopped or mashed:

- lean meat
- kai moana - kina, pipi, paua, boneless fish
- vegetables - silverbeet, peas, beans, cabbage, creamed corn.

#### *Other suggestions:*

- soft fresh fruit - orange or mandarin segments or slices of kiwifruit
- rēwena bread, white bread, plain crackers
- fine porridge
- yoghurt, custard, grated cheese.

#### ***“I want to feed myself!”***

Offer your baby small pieces of food to hold - a small sandwich,  
a finger of toast, or a rusk. As babies and toddlers can choke  
very easily, **don't leave them alone** while eating.

Do not give small hard foods such as whole nuts.

#### ***Allergies***

If you have a family history of allergy, discuss the introduction  
of solids with your plunket nurse or health professional.

For more information, ask your health professional for a copy of  
*Eating for Healthy Babies and Toddlers*, Code 1521.



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