

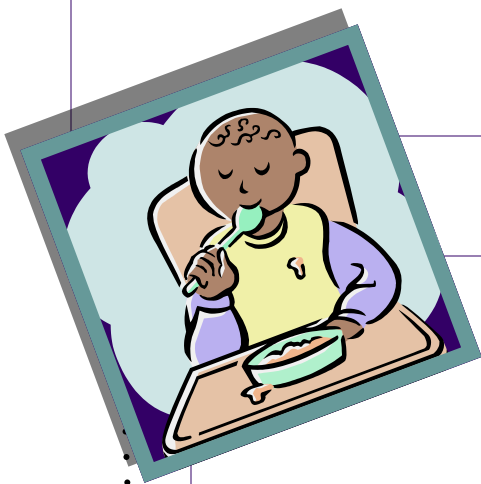
# Starting Solid Foods

Baton Rouge Clinic  
Pediatrics  
Shelley M. Martin, MD  
(225) 246-9290

Welcome to the exciting world of SOLID FOODS! You are about to venture into the depths of messes you could have never imagined! Feeding time should become much more fun for everyone as we introduce a variety of new foods to your baby. Remember that at first your baby's tongue may push cereal directly out. This is a normal reflex called the "tongue-thrust" reflex. You should notice this decreasing after the first week or so as your baby learns to overcome it.

## Introducing Cereal

Start with single grain RICE CEREAL. Begin with 1 tablespoon of cereal mixed with 1-2 ounces of breast milk, formula, or water, and feed with a spoon. It should be fairly thin so that your baby can learn to deal with food in his mouth and swallow it. Start once a day, picking a time when you are able to spend a few extra minutes without being interrupted or hurried, and when your baby is not excessively tired or hungry. Gradually thicken the cereal mixture as she becomes accustomed to the texture. You may increase the feedings to twice a day as soon as you feel your baby is ready. Oatmeal cereal can be introduced once your baby is tolerating rice cereal.



## Introducing Other Foods

Once your baby is tolerating cereal twice a day, he may be ready to start the FIRST FOODS, which include single ingredient vegetables and fruits. Your baby should continue to have cereal once or twice a day, and the vegetables and fruits may be given in addition to the cereal or by itself as a third meal. The following schedule is recommended to maximize the tolerance of all types of foods. Feed one new food for 3-5 days to ensure that it will agree with your baby. If she is not tolerating a food, you may see excessive spitting, loosening of the stool, or allergic reactions such as rashes or hives. If your baby demonstrates any of these signs, call and discuss it with us. You can continue to give foods your baby has tolerated well when introducing new ones.

Studies show that the optimal time to introduce solid foods is between four and six months. Infants had less chance of developing allergies when foods were introduced within this window.

## Recommended Schedule for Introducing First Foods

- VEGETABLES- start with *orange* vegetables first (squash, carrots, sweet potatoes) then progress to *green* vegetables (green beans, peas, etc.).
- FRUITS- introduce these in the same fashion- one at a time, giving each new food a couple days.
- MEATS- may be introduced through the first foods (*yuck!*) or through simple combinations of meat/fruit or meat/vegetable found in the 2nd foods.

When your baby is easily taking the 2 ounce servings of first baby foods, you may progress to the 2nd foods, or begin to introduce table foods. Your baby should continue to get 1/2 cup iron-fortified cereal per day. The latest research shows that introducing even allergenic foods prior to one year may decrease an infant's risk of developing allergies. (*Yes, that is exactly the opposite of what we used to say!*) If your baby has signs of allergies like unexplained hives or rashes, recurrent diarrhea or eczema, we may alter this recommendation, but otherwise, bring on the buffet!



**Raw Honey** should **NEVER** be given to infants under 1 year of age as it may contain botulinum bacteria, which causes infantile paralysis.



At six months and when your baby is able to sit upright by herself, you may introduce finger foods. I usually recommend that you start with *graham crackers* or *unsalted saltines* instead of teething biscuits or zwieback toast. You should watch your baby very closely as they tend to try and see how many crackers fit in their mouth at one time only when you have your back turned. Choking is always a possibility! We'll talk more about this at the six month check-up.

**Good Luck!**