FEEDING YOUR BABY
5-6 MONTHS

When to Feed My Baby Solid Foods?

At around 5-6 months old, your baby will be ready for solid food. You can tell whether or not your baby is ready by what your baby can do.

Your baby is ready for first foods when he or she can:

- Sit up with support.
- Hold head steady.
- Keep food in mouth and swallow.

If your baby cannot do these things then you should not introduce new foods. Your baby does not have enough mouth control to swallow.

Babies develop at their own pace. Only introduce solid foods when your baby is ready. Many babies are not ready for solid foods until they are 6 months old.

What to Feed My Baby?

The first solid food you should introduce to your baby is iron-fortified infant cereal. Choose a single ingredient infant cereal like rice, oatmeal, or barley.

Infant rice cereal is the best to feed your baby first. Rice is less likely to cause an allergic reaction. Continue infant rice cereal for several days before introducing infant oatmeal or infant barley.

You should still be feeding your baby breast milk or formula.

To prepare infant cereal, mix it with breast milk or formula. Don’t add any sugar, salt, or other seasoning to cereal.

Always serve your baby cereal with a spoon out of a dish. Never feed cereal from a bottle.

For the first few weeks offer cereal once or twice a day after breast or bottle feeding. Your baby will not be ready to start eating strained fruits and vegetables for another month. Give your baby time to master cereal first.
Helpful Hints About Feeding Your Baby

- Offer one new food at a time.
- Prepare infant cereal with breast milk or formula.
- Feed infant cereal from a dish & spoon; NEVER PUT CEREAL IN A BOTTLE.
- Offer infant cereal after breast or bottle feeding.
- Offer small amounts of infant cereal.
- Don’t force your baby to eat.
- Be patient with your baby.
- Expect feedings to be messy.
- Make mealtimes enjoyable for both of you.

How to Feed My Baby?

Always feed your baby cereal from a dish and use a baby-size spoon to feed. When introducing infant cereal offer your baby a small taste first. If your baby shows interest, offer a few more tastes. If your baby doesn’t like it, or pushes the spoon away, wait a few more weeks and try again. Don’t force your baby to eat. Babies accept solid food when they are ready.

The first feeding will probably be messy. Don’t forget your baby has only been sucking up until now. It will take a few tries before he or she learns to swallow solids. With a little patience, you can help your baby learn to eat and like different foods. Try to make mealtime pleasant for both of you.

Sometimes a new food can cause allergies, such as diarrhea, a skin rash, or even a runny nose. It is important to offer only one new food at a time just in case your baby does have an allergy. This way you will know what food caused the reaction. If you think your baby has an allergy, check with your doctor or clinic right away.