

# Feeding Baby Solid Foods

## New Recommendations

### Introduce Solid Foods at Six Months

Health Canada recommends starting baby on solid foods at six months of age, not at four to six months. This is a change from the recommendations in *Feeding Baby Solid Foods*. Starting solid foods at six months applies to breastfed and formula fed babies. For information about when to introduce solid foods to babies born before 37 weeks gestation or with specific medical conditions, contact your doctor, public health nurse or registered nutritionist/dietitian.

For the first six months, breastmilk or iron-fortified formula is all baby needs. Breastfeeding can continue after solid foods are introduced at six months and for up to two years of age and longer.

### Iron Rich Foods at Six Months

From six months of age and older, your baby will need solid foods with iron. Iron is needed for baby's growth and development and to prevent anemia.

**Iron-fortified baby cereals and/or other iron-rich foods should be offered daily to maintain health.**

Other iron-rich foods include:

- meats - beef, pork, lamb, and veal
- poultry - chicken, turkey
- fish
- tofu
- beans and other legumes
- egg yolks

### Vitamin C - How It Helps Iron

Eating foods high in Vitamin C at the same time as iron rich foods, helps baby absorb iron. Most vegetables and fruit contain Vitamin C, and add variety to your baby's diet.

Foods with Vitamin C include:

- broccoli
- sweet potato or yam
- cantaloupe
- kiwi
- asparagus
- brussels sprouts
- tomato sauce
- squash
- mango
- red peppers



For more information on adding vegetables and fruit to your baby's diet, see pages 4 and 5 of the ***Feeding Baby Solid Foods*** booklet. Limit the amount of fruit juice to two to four ounces (60 ml to 125 ml) daily. To prevent tooth decay offer juice in a cup only, not by bottle.

## Food Texture

Your baby needs to eat foods with different textures. This helps baby learn to chew, swallow, and enjoy the same foods as the rest of the family.

- **Six months** - puree baby's food until baby learns to swallow mashed foods and then offer soft and smooth mashed foods.
- **Six to nine months** - change texture from mashed foods to include minced, grated, and finely chopped foods as baby's ability to swallow improves.
- **Nine to 12 months** - change textures to include diced and cubed food, while still offering baby a variety of mashed, minced, and grated foods.

## Introducing Solid Foods

**The main points to keep in mind as you introduce solid foods are:**

- Offer iron-rich food(s) everyday.
- Progress to foods with more texture so baby learns to chew and swallow.
- Introduce one new food at a time and allow at least three days before adding the next new food, so allergies are easily detected.

When introducing baby solid foods at six months of age, you can be more flexible with the order of foods given to your baby. It is not necessary to introduce foods strictly in the order specified in Feeding Baby Solid Foods. Offer your baby a variety of plain nutritious foods, keeping in mind the main points listed above.

## Include Baby in Family Mealtimes

Baby can have the same foods as the rest of the family as long as the texture is appropriate and the food is plain. **Plain foods do not have added salt, sweeteners or coatings.**

## More Information

For advice and health information, contact:

- Local public health nurse or registered nutritionist/dietitian
- Health Link Alberta
  - Edmonton, call 408-LINK (5465)
  - Calgary, call 943-LINK (5465)
  - Outside Edmonton and Calgary local calling areas, call toll-free 1-866-408-LINK (5465)

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Developed by the Provincial Community and Public Health Nutritionists' Infant Nutrition Working Group.