



## When to introduce solids

Making the transition from breast milk to solid foods is a big step. Ideally you should hold out until 6 months but if your baby has already doubled his birth weight or more, at 5 months or less, then he may be ready. If you're unsure, chat to your paediatrician or contact us at Baby Grow Clinic.

### Getting your baby started

#### 5-6 months

Assuming that you are on 6 breast milk feeds a day, continue with this routine.

Example: 06:00 breast  
09:00 breast  
12:00 breast  
15:00 breast  
17:00 introduce rice cereal  
18:00 breast  
bath  
19:00 breast

Mix one teaspoon of rice cereal with breastmilk or boiled water. Cereal consistency should be runny. This stage serves mainly to introduce taste. Start with one teaspoon of cereal per feed.

Build up to a few teaspoons per feed. Your baby is improving her ability to move food from the front to the back of her mouth to swallow. Some baby's have a hearty appetite for cereal from the beginning. Others are less eager. Be patient and persistent.

After 2 weeks add single ingredient foods (one phase at a time). Add a breakfast cereal feed (1), introduce vegetables (2). Then introduce fruit (3). Continue with this routine until 6 months.

Example: 06:00 breast  
08:00 add a rice cereal feed  
09:00 breast  
12:00 breast  
and gradually introduce fruit  
15:00 breast  
17:00 gradually introduce vegetables (replace cereal)  
18:00 breast  
bath  
19:00 breast



## 6 – 6 months and 2 weeks

Example: 06:00 breast  
08:00 introduce wheat cereal (replaces rice cereal)  
09:00 breast  
12:00 slowly introduce veggies and protein (chicken / mince / peanut butter / eggs)  
15:00 breast  
18:00 breast  
bath  
19:00 breast

## 8 months

Start introducing mashed or chopped finger foods in earnest. Try dried fruit, rice cakes, and baby biltong. Introduce boiled-cooled water to drink.

Example: 06:00 breast  
08:00 wheat cereal  
09:00 breast  
and snack (rice cake, dried mango, baby biltong, yoghurt, cheese)  
12:00 lunch (plus fruit and water or black rooibos tea)  
14:00 introduce another snack  
15:00 breast  
17:00 dinner (plus water or black rooibos tea)  
19:00 breast

At this stage you might feel that baby is consuming too much milk in addition to solid foods. However, remember that breast milk is 80% water.

## 10 months

06:00 breast  
08:00 wheat cereal and fruit  
10:00 snack and water  
12:00 lunch with protein (plus water or black rooibos tea)  
15:00 breast  
17:00 dinner with protein and fruit to follow (plus water or black rooibos tea)  
19:00 breast

## 12 months

Example: 06:00 breast  
08:00 wheat cereal  
10:00 snack  
12:00 lunch (plus fruit and water or black rooibos tea)  
14:00 snack  
17:00 dinner (plus fruit and water or black rooibos tea)  
19:00 breast

Your baby will be eating almost everything you eat but without the salt. Be creative. Experiment with herbs. Remember that baby never needs fruit juice (too sweet) and chocolate or sweets. Be sure to give him water throughout the day.

Healthy eating habits are essential to immunity, allergy prevention and general wellbeing. Although, this doesn't mean you can't be adventurous. Be creative. Making your own fresh baby food is preferable but if you can't always do this check labels at supermarkets and hold back on including too many ingredients, particularly artificial ones.

## Allergies and immunity

New research indicates that food previously avoided before 12 months to prevent allergies should be introduced earlier. This includes peanuts, egg white, and strawberries. Earlier introduction builds up baby's immune system to guard against allergy forming foods. However, if there is an allergy history (generally peanuts or eggs) in your direct family (parents or siblings) then hold off on that particular food until 12 months. Thereafter, start introducing these in small quantities.

Studies show that wheat should be introduced before 7 months to avoid gluten allergies (as per the 6 – 6 months and 2 weeks example above). Always avoid cows milk and honey until 12 months.

In addition to pureed food introduce textures and more food varieties including proteins. At 12 months baby will become a fussier eater so the more tastes you introduce before then, the better.

