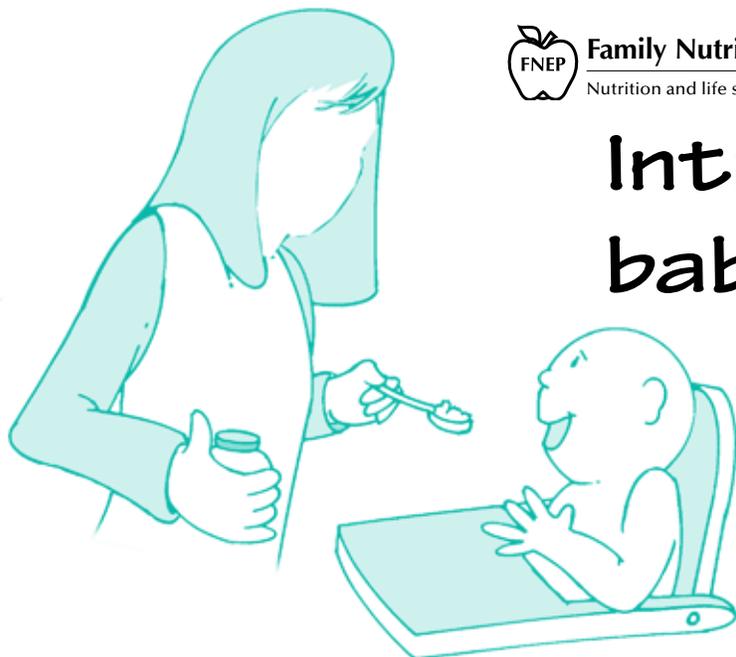




# Introducing your baby to solid foods



- Remember, babies have small stomachs and need small, frequent feedings. Begin with a teaspoon of food and gradually give more as your baby accepts it. Learn to recognize and respect your baby's hunger and fullness cues.

## Tips for feeding babies who can sit up without help

- When your baby can sit up without help, he or she may be ready for thicker pureed foods and soft mashed foods without lumps.
- Your baby will be ready to drink from a cup with help.
- Continue to give your baby breast milk or formula, infant cereals, and a variety of fruits, vegetables and meat.
- You can also offer baby juice with added vitamin C in a cup, but limit the amount to 2 to 4 ounces a day.

## Preventing food allergies

- If you have a family history of food allergies, breast-feed your baby as long as possible.
- Don't introduce foods like milk, egg whites, citrus fruits or juices, wheat and soy until well after baby's first birthday.
- If you notice vomiting, diarrhea, wheezing or a skin rash after introducing a new food, stop feeding the new food and contact your health care provider right away.
- Allergic reactions to some foods, like peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish can be life-threatening. Check with your health care provider before introducing them, especially if there is a family history of food allergies.

## When can I feed solid foods?

If your baby does *all* of the following, he or she may be ready for solid foods:

- Has good control of head and neck.
- Sits with support.
- Has doubled his or her birth weight and weighs 13 pounds or more.
- Is hungry after eight to 10 breast-feedings or 32 ounces of formula in a day.

These signs usually occur around the middle of baby's first year, but every baby is an individual. These are general guidelines, so be sure to discuss when to feed solids with your health care provider.

## Off to a healthy start

- When it's time for solids, start with single-grain, iron-fortified infant cereal.
- Always wait at least two days before starting another new food. This makes it easy to watch for food sensitivities and allergies.
- After cereal, introduce single-ingredient fruits and vegetables. The order of introduction doesn't matter.
- Once your baby has tried single-ingredient fruits and vegetables, you can introduce combinations.
- After fruits and vegetables, introduce pureed meats.



# Keep your child from choking

Babies and young children are especially at risk of choking. Ask your health care provider to show you what to do if your baby or child chokes.

## Tips for a safe mealtime

- Serve foods that are right for your baby or child's age and development.
- Stay with babies and children when they are eating — they won't be able to make noise to alert you if they choke.
- Feed babies and children while they are sitting. Don't let them eat while talking, running or lying down.
- Encourage your child to eat slowly and chew food well.
- Don't use medicine for teething pain before meals because it can interfere with chewing.
- Grind or mash and moisten food for babies and young children.
- Cook foods until soft enough to easily pierce with a fork.
- Cut soft foods into small pieces not more than ½ inch.

## To make mealtimes safer ...

### Meat and nuts:

- Don't give babies or young children tough meat, large chunks of meat or whole nuts.
- Cut regular and toddler hot dogs\* and sausages lengthwise into short, thin strips or pieces not more than ½ inch.
- Remove the bones from meat, chicken and fish, then cut them into small pieces.

- Spread peanut butter thinly on bread or crackers.

\* Heat hot dogs until steaming hot. This kills *L. monocytogenes*, a bacteria that can harm your child.

### Dairy:

- Don't feed chunks of cheese. Cut cheese into small pieces not more than ½ inch.

### Fruits and vegetables:

- Don't feed large chunks of fruit or vegetables. Cut into pieces not more than ½ inch.
- Cut grapes, cherries, melon balls and cherry tomatoes into small pieces not more than ½ inch.
- Cook carrots, celery, green beans and other vegetables until slightly soft, then cut them into thin sticks.
- Give only a few raisins at a time and supervise your child closely.
- Remove peels, pits and seeds from fresh fruit, then cut into small pieces not more than ½ inch.

### Grains:

- Don't give babies or young children popcorn, chips or pretzels.
- Cook and finely grind or mash whole-grain kernels of corn, wheat, rice or barley.

### Sweets:

- Don't give babies or young children marshmallows, round or hard candies, or chewing gum.

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For more information, call MU Extension's Show Me Nutrition line at 1-888-515-0016.

Running out of money for food? Contact your local food stamp office or go online to [dss.mo.gov/fsd/fstamp](http://dss.mo.gov/fsd/fstamp).