



Children'sSM
Healthcare of Atlanta

The No-Stress Way to Feed Your Growing Baby

Around six or seven months

Now your baby can join the fun at the family table! While your sweet little one will still be getting most of his nutrition needs from breastmilk or formula, your baby may be ready for you to start introducing solid food.

Where one baby might eagerly gobble rice cereal the day he turns six months, another might make funny faces or keep spitting out everything you give him well into his seventh month. No need to rush...it takes time to teach a baby how to eat, so keep offering and just be patient. Starting solids is a gradual process, and some babies will accept the change at a slower rate than others.

Starting solids

- **Plan for a positive eating experience** — Sit directly in front of your baby when you're spoon-feeding. A smile and calm voice will show him you're relaxed and that eating time is a good time. Even though your mom and your mom's mom did it, do not play games with the food.
- **Prepare and put nutritious food on the table** — Try a new food every three to four days, and continue offering foods your baby has previously refused.
- **Provide with patience** — If your baby shows you he isn't ready at six months, don't worry or take it personally. Take a few days off and try again later.
- **Let your baby choose to eat** — Don't force your infant to eat and don't encourage him to keep eating after he's showed you he's full.



Drinking tips

Once your baby can sit up well, he can start learning to drink from an open cup.

- **Start with baby steps** — Sit with him and give him sips very slowly. He needs to learn to sip and drink, not just suck.
- **Start with one ounce** — Use a tiny bit of water at first. Later, try breastmilk or formula.
- **Avoid juice** — Too much juice can give babies diarrhea and it replaces healthier things like water and whole fruit, such as bananas. Never give your baby other sugary drinks, like soda, tea or sports drinks.

STRONG⁴LIFESM

Between seven and 12 months

The excitement starts as your baby slowly transitions from runny baby foods to thicker spoon foods, to finger foods, and finally, to easy-to-chew table foods (when he's ready).

Let everyone do their part, and eating will be a success story at your house.

- **Plan for a positive eating experience** — Sit and eat with your baby. Present nutritious food calmly and with a smile, even if it's a food you don't like.
- **Provide with patience** — Offer new and previously refused foods. Some children need to see a new food 10-15 times before deciding to try it.
- **Let him feed himself** — Let your baby be messy. He needs to learn to feed himself.
- **Let him choose** — It's his job to decide whether or not to eat, what to eat from what you provide and how much to eat. Don't force him to eat, or encourage him to keep eating after he's shown you he's "all done!"

Continue to offer water, breastmilk or formula in an open cup at meals and snack times. Your baby should not have juice or other sugary drinks.

Remember, how we feed our families is just as important as *what we feed our families.*

When everyone does their job, mealtime is less stressful and children will develop healthy eating habits.