

Starting Solids

At around 6 months, when your baby:

- holds their head up
- sits with less help
- often puts their hands in their mouth
- shows signs of chewing movements

they are probably ready for their first solid foods.

First foods – plain, soft, smooth

- iron-fortified infant cereal/baby rice
- cooked and puréed meat or vegetarian alternatives such as lentils, beans
- puréed fruit, eg apple, pear, banana
- cooked and puréed vegetables, eg kūmara, potato, cassava
- bought baby food, the right age for your baby.

Remove skins and seeds from fruit and vegetables before you cook or purée them. To purée baby's food use a blender or push food through a fine sieve. Use expressed breast milk or formula to make the food runny enough for baby to swallow. Don't add salt, sugar, honey, sweeteners, butter, margarine or cream to baby's food.

Milk first – solids to follow

It is best to try a new food when baby is most relaxed and happy. Offer solids as a 'top up' after the milk feed. Try ½–2 teaspoons at first, and gradually increase until baby is having a 3–4 teaspoon meal. Hold baby or place in a high chair to feed. Try one new food every 2–4 days. If your baby does not like it the first time, try again with a small amount a few days later. It might take up to 15 tries!

From about 7–8 months, when your baby:

- sits without support
- is interested in finger foods
- has some teeth
- is learning to bite and chew

they are probably ready to move to some mashed foods, finger foods and new flavours, such as:

- mashed (rather than puréed) fruit, vegetables – introduce new vegetables such as yams, taro, courgettes, broccoli, silverbeet, pūha, bok choy, (take care to remove stalks and 'stringy bits' from leafy green vegetables)



- white or fine wholemeal toast fingers, rusks
- well-cooked pasta, noodles
- cheese, yoghurt, custard
- puréed meat, fish, lentils, beans
- mashed tofu, or tempeh.

From around 8–9 months, when your baby:

- is interested in a range of foods and textures
- can use a feeding cup
- needs only a bit of help to eat
- can chew and bite well, and can chew lumps

they are probably ready for some more 'lumpy' foods, like:

- minced meat, chicken, kai moana
- porridge, wheat biscuits, infant muesli
- soft raw fruit – orange, kiwifruit, pineapple, berries.

From 8–9 months, you can offer solids before milk feeds.

I want to feed myself!

Offer finger foods:

- small sandwiches
- fingers of toast
- plain crackers with cheese, yeast-based spread
- pieces of fruit
- salad vegetables - lettuce, cucumber.



As babies and toddlers can choke very easily, **don't leave them alone** while eating.

Do not give small hard foods such as whole nuts.

Keep using white or fine wholemeal bread for sandwiches and toast.

Allergies

Try new foods one at a time every 2–4 days. If you suspect an allergy, or have a strong family history of allergy, talk to your doctor.

New Zealand Government



For more information, ask your health professional for a copy of *Eating for Healthy Babies and Toddlers*, Code HE1521.

This resource is available from www.healthed.govt.nz or the Authorised Provider at your local DHB.

Revised May 2008. Reprinted May 2008. Code HE6014

