

Solid Foods

The Big Picture for Liquid and Solid Nutrition

<u>Age</u>	<u>Liquid Nutrition</u>	<u>Solid Nutrition</u>	<u>Solid Serving Size</u>
*4-6 months	22-30oz 5-6 meals	maybe cereal maybe vegs/fruits 1-2 feedings/day	2-4Tbsp (1-2oz) 1-2 items/meal 0-8oz/day, pureed food
6-9 months	24-32 oz 4-5 meals	cereal fruit/vegs meat grains dairy (limited) 3 feeding/day	2-4 Tbsp (1-2oz) 2-3 items/meal, or a whole Stage 2 jar. 8-14oz/day More textures.
9-12 months	20-30oz 3-4 meals	All of the above table foods 3 meals/day	3-4 Tbsp (2oz) 3 items/meal, or a Stage 3 jar. 10-15oz/day , bite size pieces

*Solid nutrition from 4-6 months is completely optional.

Key Points to Remember:

- 🔑 Prepare baby food jars: Stage 1=2oz serving. Stage 2=4oz serving. Stage 3=5-6oz serving.
- 🔑 Remember that breast milk and formula have 20 calories per oz. A 2.5 oz jar of Stage 1 carrots has 25 calories.
- 🔑 Do not reduce the amount of liquid nutrition until your baby eats enough solid food to replace the calories. This gradual taper begins somewhere between 6-9 months. This is when a solid meal is at least a 4-6oz serving.
- 🔑 Every baby is different!

Baby Food Lingo:

- 👶🍴 **Stage 1 Food**-The first solid food given to babies. Pureed. Most easily digested, least allergenic. Examples: rice cereal, fruits, vegetables, except for berries and citrus.
- 👶🍴 **Stage 2 Food**-More complex to digest, more allergenic solid food. Chunkier texture. Examples: oatmeal cereal, barley cereal, mixed cereal, meats, pastas, dairy, papaya, mango, and guava.
- 👶🍴 **Stage 3 Food**-Most complex solid food. Very chunky. Comparable to table food.
- 👶🍴 **Finger Food**- Food your baby can feed himself. Good for independence, fine motor skills. Examples: teething/biter biscuits, small pieces of fruit/vegetables, crackers, pasta wheels, Cheerios, ground meat, and canned chicken.
- 👶🍴 **Table Food**-What you eat.

Q&A on Solid Foods

Q: My baby is four months old now. How can I tell if he is ready to eat solid foods?

A: Try it and see what happens. From an allergy standpoint, he should be able to tolerate “Stage 1” foods. It’s more a matter of knowing what to do with a bite of food on the tongue. Some babies are ready at four months; some aren’t ready until six months. Your baby will tell you if he is ready. Try putting a spoonful of rice cereal on his tongue. If he swallows it, he’s ready. If he spits it back out at you, put the box away and try again next week. *There’s no hurry to start solids.*

Bottom Line: There’s a great deal of variability amongst babies (and their doctors) about when they are ready to eat solid food. Solid food before six months of age is really just for fun, anyways.

Q: What is rice cereal?

A: You will find it in the baby food aisle in a box. Rice cereal is often the first food your baby eats. You buy it in a box as dry flakes. Mix it with either expressed breast milk or formula. Be sure you read the packaging. *Some rice cereal already has formula added.* This can be a problem for a baby with cow’s milk allergy. Make sure the cereal is pretty watery-not the thick texture you would eat. Make about two tablespoons worth. You can always make more. Offer it as a snack *after* baby has had breast milk or formula. If you try to feed him solid food when he is hungry, you won’t be able to shovel it in fast enough. By four months of age, your baby could probably win a chugging contest with the speed he guzzles down 160 calories (8 oz of liquid). Try one feeding a day of rice cereal for four days before embarking upon other foods. Cereal should be offered daily because it is a great source of iron. Once your baby is at least six months old, you can experiment with tastier cereals (oatmeal, barley, and other grains).

Q: What other foods should I offer to my four-month-old baby?

A: Rice cereal and Stage 1 foods are fine for four to six-month olds. Stage 1 foods include carrots, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, squash, green beans, peas, bananas, peaches, pears, plums, prunes, and applesauce. All of these foods are pureed.

Q: How often do I introduce a new food?

A: After your baby has mastered rice cereal, forge ahead and introduce one new Stage 1 food every three to four days. You are introducing foods slowly because you are looking to see if you baby has any food allergies.

Q: How often do I feed my baby solid foods?

A: Start with one feeding a day and work up to three feedings a day. *Always feed your baby breast milk or formula first.* Then offer solid foods as a between meal snack. Remember, until your baby eats several jars of food, he’s drinking his calories. When your baby is only eating rice cereal, one feeding a day is fine. When he has a repertoire of foods, you can feed him three times a day.

Q: Can I make my own baby food?

A: Absolutely. There is nothing special about prepared baby foods, other than being prepared. After six months of age, it’s actually preferable to offer food from your table. That way, your baby will get use to your cooking.