



---

## Uploaded to VFC Website

▶▶ November 2012 ◀◀

---

This Document has been provided to you courtesy of Veterans-For-Change!

Feel free to pass to any veteran who might be able to use this information!

For thousands more files like this and hundreds of links to useful information, and hundreds of "Frequently Asked Questions, please go to:

[Veterans-For-Change](#)

---

*Veterans-For-Change is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Corporation  
Tax ID #27-3820181*

***If Veteran's don't help Veteran's, who will?***

We appreciate all donations to continue to provide information and services to Veterans and their families.

[https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=\\_s-xclick&hosted\\_button\\_id=WGT2M5UTB9A78](https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=WGT2M5UTB9A78)

---

**Note:**

VFC is not liable for source information in this document, it is merely provided as a courtesy to our members.



## INFANT NUTRITION

In the past twenty years, we have learned a great deal about optimal infant nutrition, and based on this information, one of the current recommendations of the committee on nutrition of the American Academy of Pediatrics is to withhold solid foods of any kind until the baby is six months of age. Most authorities in the field basically agree with this recommendation, but there are differences in opinion as to the exact age at which solid foods should be introduced. The timing varies between four and six months of age.

Why have the recommendations about the introduction of solid foods changed so drastically? Why shouldn't solid foods be started before 4-6 months of age? There are three basic reasons for our current position relative to the introduction of solid foods:

#1 There is presumptive evidence that starting an infant on solid foods too early may result in the development of food allergies, perhaps respiratory allergies, or even juvenile onset diabetes. Although these studies are ongoing it just makes sense not to take this risk and to delay the introduction of solid foods.

#2 New studies have shown that an infant receives their complete nutritional needs from being exclusively breast fed for up to the first six months of their life, and if breast feeding is not possible, from feeding iron fortified formulas. Many doctors think that the added calories provided by solid foods are unnecessary and may contribute to excessive weight gain. These extra calories manufacture fat cells that multiply and the result may be a baby who is started on the road to obesity later in their life.

#3 A baby less than four months of age has little or no control over his/her head and neck muscles. Therefore any infant fed solid foods before this time may not be able to sit up to be spoon fed (NEVER PUT CEREAL IN A BOTTLE!) and may not turn away from feeding when they are full. As they get older they are able to turn away when they are satisfied which is a clue to the observant parent to stop their feeding. It is much easier to follow a baby's clues when they are older.

Many mothers and grandmothers will ask the question "But my baby is always hungry and doesn't sleep. Won't some cereal at bedtime help him sleep through the night?" There is no proof that solid foods help a baby sleep all night. But even so, this is not a good enough reason to introduce solid foods at too early an age. Even if you have the inconvenience of getting up a few extra times for night feedings, it is well worth the extra effort for all of the benefits. Remember, "this too shall pass."

Based on the number of surveys, it is clear that the early introduction of solid foods into the infant's diet remains one of the major faulty feeding practices in the United States today. The message about delaying the introduction of solid foods is having an effect on our feeding practices, but we still have a long way to go, and new studies are continuously being reviewed.

It usually takes a baby a few days of practice to learn to swallow cereal from a spoon. Infant cereals are introduced first because they are all fortified with iron in a form that is easily and readily digested and absorbed. Breast-fed babies need extra iron around 5-6 months of age, as all babies have pretty much depleted the iron supplies they received from their mothers at birth. Therefore, iron must be added to their diet or the baby will become iron deficient over time and could develop anemia.

Each new food should be started by giving the baby several spoonfuls on the first day and gradually increasing the amount each day until your baby gets used to eating from a spoon. Every baby is different, so follow their clues, as they will push away, and turn their heads when they are finished. There is no rush.

We advise mothers to start solid foods, beginning with rice cereal, at about 5-6 months of age. This is somewhat individualized since some babies have bigger appetites than others. An infant who consumes over 32 ounces of formula each day, and who continually cries for more, may need cereal a little earlier than a baby who is drinking less than 32 ounces a day.

Some mothers simply can't wait for the day when they can start spoon feeding their babies (although the newness will wear off), while other mothers are not nearly as eager. On average breast feeding mothers often delay solid foods longer than the bottle fed babies. There is not a reason to rush into solids.

It is important not to add sugar or salt to your baby's first solid foods. The baby foods today have removed salt and most sugar from their purified products, what remains is the naturally occurring salt and sugar, which are adequate for a baby's nutritional needs. We would advise you not to season your baby's food based on your own food preferences. No baby is born a "sugar freak," but they may become accustomed to sweet tastes early on. These same rules apply to any baby foods you make at home, controlling the amounts of salt and sugar you add may help to prevent subsequent health problems such as dental decay, high blood pressure and obesity.

When your baby is around 7-9 months of age, sips of water may be offered from a "sippy cup." Most babies rapidly learn to hold and handle the cup by themselves, in preparation for weaning from the bottle at one year. We don't recommend using juice on a routine basis, as babies receive all of the vitamin C they need from other foods.

If you follow these suggestions, you will begin your baby on a lifetime of a well balanced and nutritionally sound diet. The right attitude about feeding is also very important. It is not necessary to coax or fight with your baby about eating. Mealtime should be a happy time and should be relaxed and pleasant. If your baby refuses to eat a meal, they are probably simply not hungry. Don't worry. They will not starve by skipping a meal. Their appetite should determine the amount of food they will eat in a sitting, and remember, they like you, may be hungrier at one meal than another. As your baby begins to crawl, stand and walk their appetite will often increase. But extra calories and weight do not mean extra health. A fat baby is not necessarily a healthier baby. If you allow your baby to eat three healthy meals per day and allow the baby to gain weight at his or her own pace under your doctor's supervision, you will never go wrong.