

Navigating Solids

Welcome to your quick-start guide!! This tool is intended to give you ideas, suggestions, and a clearer understanding of the different textures of foods. I have been working on this guide for over 10 years and, through my background of Speech-Language Pathology, Lactation Consultation, and Feeding Education I know the information available can be overwhelming and conflicting. I have used my clinical observations and education to create this with the intention is not is not all-inclusive.

If you ever need more ideas or have questions, just ask!! You can follow me on Instagram (link below) for updates and ideas, as well as to ask any questions you might have.

This guide was also developed for babies who were born term with no complications.

If you have questions on how to adapt this guide for your little one feel free to ask!!

I would like to address the common phrase I see and hear: "Food before one is just for fun." The truth in this statement is that foods offered before 12 months of age are to compliment the baby's intake of formula and/or breast milk.

Food at this stage should be intended for fun in that volume is not the primary goal; rather the senses need to be stimulated when food is around: sight, feel, smell, sound, etc. Mouth skills also need to be developed and mastered before solid foods can be consumed for nutritional intake. Formula and/or breast milk should continue to be the primary source of nutrition as dictated by your pediatrician or medical team.

No matter where you are in your feeding journey with you little one the goal is for mealtimes to be fun for everyone.

My goal is for caregivers to understand the differences between food textures and feel less stressed about what to offer.

We can explore more in our sessions or coaching class.

Enjoy!!

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What To Do First

Start:

Birth - As Soon As Possible

Where:

Floor, Play mats, When held

Goal:

Develop strength

- ☐ Encourage as often as possible
- ☐ Consider frequency more than duration
- ☐ Take off the mittens
- ☐ Make eye contact when possible

Tummy Time



Hands to Mouth



Mouth Play

Start:

3 months of age

Where:

During play, when held upright

Goal:

Positive, pleasurable experiences with the mouth

- ☐ Offer 3+ times a day with supervision
- ☐ Consider frequency more than duration
- ☐ Make eye contact when possible
- ☐ Bring your baby into the kitchen or meal prep space when possible

These are a few of my favorite things...



Looking for links? Head over to my website under the “Products & Tools” tab!!

Purees

Start:

6 months of age

Where:

Sharing a meal, seated

Goal:

SMALL tastes & messy FUN

- ☐ Begin with just a teaspoon of food
- ☐ Avoid foods with lumps, clumps, or things to chew
- ☐ Start with foods that have single or minimal ingredients
- ☐ Repeat the same food for 2-3 days as tolerated and accepted

Can be purees be skipped? Can you start earlier than 6 months of age?

Here's what the last decade of clinical work has taught me:

Purees can be a valuable tool to teach a very different mouth sequence needed for eating in comparison to breast and bottle feeding.

***Please note the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends introducing allergen foods such as peanuts as early as 6 months of age, but not before. Honey should continue to be avoided until a child is 1 year of age. If you have a family history of food allergies or intolerances discuss the decision of introduction with your child's pediatrician.

Examples



Ricotta Cheese



Applesauce



Nut butter



Hummus



Premade baby foods



Sweet potatoes

Utensil Examples



Baby's hands

Mouth Play tools

Looking for links? Head over to my website under the "Products & Tools" tab!!



MESS IS IMPORTANT



Remove the clothes.

Put the food on the tray or table.

Let them hold the spoon.

And then take aaaaaaaall of the messy face pictures!!

Next Steps

Start:

7-9 months of age if independently sitting

Where:

Sharing a meal, seated with supervision

Goal:

Developing chewing skills and FUN

- Once your child is successfully tolerating smooth purees, has been exposed to variety of flavors, and is enjoying tasting foods you can begin to offer more complex food textures:
 - This includes smashing soft, solid food textures with a fork or offering very small amounts of crumbs of dissolvable, meltable solid foods.
 - Then you can begin to offer solids foods for chewing and exploration with direct supervision.
- **It is very important to understand age is not nearly as important as skill development is when introducing foods that require chewing.**

Dissolvable, Meltable Food Examples

White Cheddar Cheeto Puffs

Snap Pea Crisps

Club Crackers

Graham Crackers

Biscoff Cookies

Veggie Sticks

Soft Food Examples

*****AVOID OR REMOVE skins, pits, and large seeds.**

Strips of scrambled eggs

Strips of ripe or canned peaches or pears

Strips of steamed apples

Toast strips

Steamed veggies

Fresh mozzarella slices

Banana, sliced into long strips

Salmon slices

Once you see your child is able to move the food around in their mouth, is using repetitive chewing to break down foods, and has minimal-to-no gagging, you can begin to offer firmer foods such as fish sticks, pastas, tender pieces of chicken, and cubes of cheese.

This typically occurs around 10 months of age.

Continue to avoid offering multiple food textures combined (casseroles, Stage 3 baby foods, etc.) until your baby is closer to 12 months of age and can handle more than one food texture in their mouth.

Foods that require thorough chewing (pork chops, raw celery, nuts, etc.) should be avoided until 15-18 months of age depending on your child's skill development.

Frequency

How often to serve your baby solid foods is dependent upon you as a family.

I typically recommend up to 3 times a day AS LONG AS consumption of solid foods **does not** interrupt or decrease consumption of breast milk or formula.

If you can only do once per day please do not feel discouraged. If you are consistent with your once daily routine and you share a meal with your child, you will continue to build the bond of mealtime and the association that eating is fun.

Red Flags

Please consider an evaluation with a qualified professional if you see the following:

Persistent or consistent choking, gagging or coughing with meals

Following a traumatic choking incident

Inability to accept any bites of table foods by 12 months of age

Refusal to touch or smell food

Difficulty achieving independent sitting by 10 months of age

Continues to eat baby food beyond 15 months of age

Fruit and Veggie Bran Muffins

INGREDIENTS

3/4 cup flour
3/4 cup oat bran cereal - I use Bob's Red Mill
1/2 cup light brown sugar, not packed
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
Cinnamon or Pumpkin Pie seasoning to taste (at least 1 teaspoon)

1 medium-large fork-smashed banana
1 5.3oz container Two Good Vanilla yogurt or 1/3 cup plain yogurt
1 egg or chia seeds*
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 cup grated carrots
1/2 cup finely chopped soft fruit (strawberries, mango, pears, kiwi)
1/2 cup smashed walnuts

*combine 1 tablespoon of chia seeds with 3 tablespoons of water, let sit for at least 20 minutes, then stir well before putting into mixture

DIRECTIONS

1. Whisk dry ingredients together and make sure brown sugar is evenly distributed.
2. Blend all wet ingredients together and ensure completely blended. Then add to dry mixture.
3. Blend until everything is moistened.
4. Fold in carrots, fruit, and nuts.
5. Grease muffin tin or use muffin cups.
6. Bake at 400 degrees Fahrenheit for 8 minutes for mini muffins or 12 minutes for regular muffins.

HOW TO OFFER

- Puree: offer single ingredients like smashed banana, yogurt, or smashed fruit
- Early Eater: slice large muffin into strips
- Learning Eater: offer small cubes on preloaded fork
- Seasoned Eater: offer whole

Chicken Salad

INGREDIENTS

3 cups boneless skinless chicken (leftover rotisserie chicken or baked chicken thighs/breasts)

2 small ripe avocados

1/3 cup plain nonfat yogurt or mayo

1/2 lemon juiced

2 Tablespoons fresh herbs or 1 Tablespoon dried herbs
(examples: cilantro, parsley, oregano)

1 teaspoon minced garlic

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Optional when older and more skilled thorough chewing is observed:

1/4 cup onion

1/4 cup celery

salt

Cayenne pepper

Dash of hot sauce of choice

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients in a food processor or blender.
2. Use “puree” setting to blend all ingredients to a thick, smooth consistency.
3. Keeps fresh for 2-3 days stored in the fridge.

HOW TO OFFER

on preloaded spoons, toast/crackers, or tray/table to be consumed with hands

offer slices of avocado or yogurt during prep for your baby to enjoy

use the pulse setting to lightly blend the ingredients when your child is showing more mature chewing skills

Slow Cooker Cheesy Potatoes & Chicken

INGREDIENTS

1 32oz bag frozen diced potatoes or 4 cups peeled, diced Yukon gold potatoes
1 cup sour cream
1 10.5oz can cream of chicken soup
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon onion powder
Pinch of pepper
3 cups shredded Monterrey Jack cheese
1 Tablespoon butter
1-2 cups leftover chicken
Optional: 1 cup steamed cauliflower rice

DIRECTIONS

1. Use a cheese grater or food processor to finely chop/grate chicken breasts or thighs. **Size of pieces must match your child's chewing skills.
2. Add all ingredient to slow cooker.
3. Stir.
4. Cover and heat on low for 4 hours.

HOW TO OFFER

- Smash all ingredients onto a spoon, or fork smash then serve onto plate/tray/table to self-feed with hands.
- Keep potatoes and chicken in cube form, and offer on preloaded forks, or allow for finger feeding.

Pumpkin Pancakes

Dairy-free, Egg-free, Gluten Free

INGREDIENTS

1/4 cup 100% pure pumpkin puree (homemade, canned, or baby food)
1/2 cup milk of choice (can use breast milk)
2 teaspoons melted refined coconut oil or oil of choice
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 purpose flour of choice
1 teaspoon baking soda
Cinnamon to taste

Optional: 1 Tablespoon mini chocolate chips (I use the Enjoy Life brand)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine pumpkin puree, milk, oil, and vanilla extract into a bowl and blend with a fork.
2. Slowly add in flour, baking soda, and cinnamon.
3. Fold in chocolate chips if using.
4. Using medium heat, warm a skillet and use additional oil to grease the pan.
5. Put 1 Tablespoon of batter onto the griddle and cook until each side is dry, flipping frequently to prevent burning.
6. Store in the fridge, or freeze for later.

HOW TO OFFER

Offer pure pumpkin puree on a spoon or on a tray.
Cut pancake into strips, or offer for finger/utensil self-feeding.

Veggie Egg Omelette

INGREDIENTS

2 large eggs or equivalent of your egg substitute of choice

1/3 cup cottage cheese

1/4 cup steamed spinach (fresh or frozen)

2 Tablespoons soft carrots or beets (steam and cooked until mushy, or use canned)

Seasonings to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Puree cottage cheese and soft-cooked vegetables in a food processor. Set aside.
2. Heat a nonstick pan over medium heat, or grease a pan with your oil of choice.
3. Beat eggs in a bowl with a fork, ensuring complete mixing.
4. Add a splash of water to the bowl (no more than 1 teaspoon) and continue to whip with the fork.
5. When thoroughly mixed add eggs to pan.
6. As sides harden, lift the egg and allow remaining uncooked eggs to run under, then place back on top.
7. Flip over to ensure thorough cooking, but be careful not to overcook.
8. Add cottage cheese and veggie puree to the egg, fold over and warm the mixture for a minute, then remove from the pan and serve.

HOW TO OFFER

- Cut into strips or cubes depending upon your child's chewing skills
- Instead of making a hard-sided omelette you can scramble all of the ingredients together in a pan, ensuring no large pieces form. Offer smashed onto a spoon or on a tray for hand-to-mouth self-feeding.