

# Feeding Your Baby

## SOLID FOODS

## Q&A



### What is a “solid food”?

“Solid food” means any food or drink other than breastmilk\*. This includes water, pablum (infant cereal) and very watery purees.

### How do I tell if my baby is ready for “solid food”?

You can introduce solids, while continuing to breastfeed, when your baby is showing these signs of readiness:

- ▶ Holds head up
- ▶ Sits up without support and can lean forward
- ▶ Can let you know when they are full (e.g., turns head away)
- ▶ Opens mouth wide for food
- ▶ Can pick up food and try to put it in their mouth

Your baby will show these signs around 6 months. Each baby is different. Try not to compare your baby to other babies. Follow your baby’s signs of readiness for food.

It is important to know the difference between a growth spurt and readiness for solids. Your baby will have many growth spurts when they may be hungrier. Growth spurts are not a sign your baby needs solids. Starting solids does not help your baby sleep through the night.

### Does it really matter if I start solid foods before my baby is showing these signs?

Yes. There are several risks to introducing solids before your baby is ready. They include:

- ▶ Low iron
- ▶ Weight loss or poor growth
- ▶ Not drinking enough breastmilk\*
- ▶ Choking
- ▶ Lung infections
- ▶ Food allergies

*\*Or formula, if you’ve made the informed decision to offer formula.*

### What if I started solid food before my baby showed the signs of readiness?



If you started offering solid food before your baby was ready, it is okay to stop offering solids until they are consistently showing the signs of readiness. Continue offering solids only if your baby is now showing the signs of readiness.

### What if my baby was born preterm (before 37 weeks)?

Introduce solid foods when your baby is showing the signs of readiness. Calculate your baby’s “corrected age” by counting from their due date (not birth date). Your baby will probably show the signs of readiness when their “corrected age” is around 6 months, and their actual age is older than 6 months. For example, if your baby was born 2 months early, they may show the signs of readiness around 8 months old.

For more information  
call 1-800-660-5853  
or visit [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org)

