

# Starting SOLIDS

Introducing your baby to solid foods can be exciting--and intimidating. You might find yourself wondering when to start, how to feed and what to try first. Here we try to answer one of the most common questions parents have when thinking about first foods: when should we start?

## When to Introduce Solids

Starting solids can look different for different children. Some may show 'signs of readiness' earlier than others. Equally, some babies may have a later start due to issues like allergies, intolerances, etc.

It is important to know that introducing solid foods before the age of four months is not recommended. Most recommendations, including those from The Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the American Academy of Pediatrics, state that children be introduced to foods other than breastmilk or formula when they are about six months old.

### Why Wait Until Six Months?

According to gastroenterologist [Dr Vincent Ho](#):

*"Before four months of age, your baby's pancreatic function, small bowel absorption and fermentation ability are underdeveloped. It is only at six months of age that your baby's pancreas will secrete enough enzymes to digest the starches and proteins of solid foods."*

## Starting Solids: Signs of Readiness

Between 4-6 months your baby will be getting much stronger. At the same time, their iron stores (built up during pregnancy) will be depleted. It is an ideal time to start introducing things like iron-rich foods.

That said, it is important that your baby is developmentally ready before you begin.

Your baby may be developmentally ready to start solids if they:

- Can sit up alone or with support
- Can control head and neck
- Open mouth when food is offered
- Swallow food rather than pushing it back out with their tongue (no more 'tongue thrust' reflex)
- Try to grasp small objects, such as toys or food
- Can transfer food from the front to the back of their tongue to swallow



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The Baby Comfort Specialist