

## **Infant Feeding Guidelines – 4 to 7 Months**

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### **INTAKE FROM 4 TO 7 MONTHS**

From 4 to 7 months of age, your baby will indicate a desire for food by opening his or her mouth when he or she sees something approaching, by sitting up and by drooling. These indicate a change in eating style. Your baby is ready to progress to solid foods.

### **CEREAL**

The recommended first food is iron-fortified infant rice cereal. Between 4 to 7 months of age, you may start baby cereal. Begin with iron-fortified infant rice cereal offered from a spoon. Cereals with fruit are not recommended because some have very little iron and are low in protein. At first, mix two to three teaspoons of dry cereal with some breast milk or formula. Gradually increase the dry cereal offered to a maximum of four to six tablespoons per feeding. Wait until your infant accepts cereal fully before advancing to other solids.

### **VEGETABLES**

You may also introduce vegetables and fruits between 4 and 7 months of age. Begin with one teaspoon of soft, fork-mashed vegetables and increase to five to eight tablespoons (one-half to one jar) as the baby's appetite increases. Good choices include carrots, sweet potatoes, squash, green beans, peas, beets and spinach. Use no fat, salt or pepper in preparing vegetables for your baby. This may taste bland to the caretaker, but the infant enjoys them. The taste for fat and salt is acquired. To avoid choking, use only vegetables that cook and mash well.

### **FRUITS**

Begin offering one to two tablespoons of soft, fork-mashed fruits once a day. Applesauce, ripe bananas, pears, peaches or apricots make good choices.

### **FEEDING TIPS**

- While introducing solid food, continue to breast-feed until the baby is 12 months of age. This may provide many health benefits to your infant. You may want to discuss this further with your physician. The amount and frequency of breast-feeding will decrease as solid foods are added.
- Consider buying a baby food grinder.
- Always try a new food for three to five days before adding another new food to see how your baby reacts.
- Signs of intolerance include rashes, vomiting, diarrhea, irritability or wheezing.
- After introduction of vegetables, use a variety of these every week to help your baby like different tastes. Be prepared for initial refusal of flavors and textures. Try another food and reintroduce the refused food in another week or two.
- For teething, a teething ring is preferred to toast or Zwieback® at this age because your baby may choke.
- Ask your doctor or dentist about fluoride supplements.
- Overfeeding with juice is extremely common. Limit the amount of fruit juices to three to four ounces per day. Serve juice to your child only in a cup. Do not give soda or other sweetened beverages to infants.
- All babies will progress at different rates and styles throughout the feeding process.

**DO NOT INTRODUCE THESE FOODS UNTIL DISCUSSED WITH YOUR CHILD’S PHYSICIAN**

The following foods may cause allergic reactions in some cases:

- Chocolate
- Citrus juice
- Egg white
- Fish and seafood
- Honey
- Peanut butter and peanut products
- Strawberries
- Whole milk.

**FOODS THAT ARE CHOKING HAZARDS AND SHOULD BE AVOIDED AT THIS TIME:**

- Apple pieces
- Grapes
- Hot dogs
- Nuts
- Raisins
- Raw carrots
- Round, hard or sticky candies
- Seeds.

**SAMPLE MENU OF FOOD INTAKE FROM 4 TO 7 MONTHS:**

- Four to six tablespoons dry cereal, mixed with breast milk or formula, offered two times a day
- Four to six tablespoons of soft, fork-mashed vegetables (one-half to one jar)
- Two to four tablespoons of soft, fork-mashed fruits (one-half jar)
- Formula and breast milk quantities will vary between infants, depending on the growth pattern
  - Infants may drink an average of 24 to 32 ounces of formula per day
  - Breast-fed infants may nurse three to six times each day.

Your child is receiving an adequate food and fluid intake if he or she has three to four wet diapers each day and is gaining weight.