

Infant Feeding Handout

Birth to 6 months:

Breastfeeding:

- Exclusive breastfeeding is ideal
- Exclusively breastfed infants do not need any other additional fluids or foods up to 6 months
- Any amount of breastfeeding is better than none
- Breastfeeding should ideally continue until 12 months or beyond (whenever mother and infant are ready to wean)
- Breastfeeding is contraindicated in HIV+ women, women taking medications should check with their physician (although most medications are ok to take while breastfeeding)

Formula Fed Infants:

- Infants who are partially breastfed or not breastfed should ideally be given cow's milk based formula until 12 months of age
- Water may be given to formula fed infants if additional fluids are needed

6 months - 12 months:

- Cup can be introduced around 6 months
- Iron rich foods should be included in the first foods (usually iron fortified cereal)
- Children who do not receive iron fortified foods will need an iron supplement
- Generally, infants start with iron fortified cereals, then vegetables, then fruits and then meats and other sources of protein
- Some newer literature and trends suggest that foods can be introduced in any order
- Start only one new food at a time, and stick with that for 1-3 days to make sure there are no reactions
- After a food is tolerated it can be mixed with other foods that you introduce - eg. if the baby is doing well with rice cereal you can then add applesauce to the rice cereal
- Textures should progress from 6 months to 12 months - Stage 1: puree, Stage 2: lumpy, Stage 3: normal texture
- Generally at 6 month babies take 1-2 meals/day, by 9 months they are usually taking 3 meals with one snack
- Nutrient poor / High Fat foods such as cakes, gravy, ice cream, cookies / biscuits and chips should be avoided/limited - they are not necessary
- Around 8 - 9 months of age start to try table foods and finger foods

12 months:

- Should be transitioned to whole milk
- Complementary Milk Supplements and Toddler Formulas are not necessary

- Should be eating all foods prepared for the family
- May start honey
- There is no evidence that delaying the onset of "allergenic foods" prevents allergies: ie eggs, fish, soy, peanut butter etc
- In the past we used to recommend delaying the start of these foods until 9mo or 1year of age, but now the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Allergy and Immunology (AAAAI) recommend that these can be started at the same time you start other solid foods (6months)
- If there is a strong family history of allergy we may recommend waiting until after 2years of age as patients may be more verbal and able to express issues if they have symptoms

Special Situations:

Milk Protein Allergy:

- Under 12 months of age we will recommend that breastfeeding mothers be on a milk free and usually soy free diet, and/or that patient takes an elemental formula (Nutramigen, Alimentum etc)
- Start solid foods as above
- Many children outgrow Milk Protein Allergy and therefore can be transitioned to whole milk at 12 months
- If a child has severe symptoms: we will continue Elemental Formula throughout the second year (12 months - 2 years) after 2 years patient can be transitioned to less complete milk (rice, almond etc)

Special Situations: Vegan Families:

Breastfeeding:

- Children of Vegan's who will be Vegan should be breastfed for the first 2 years of life ideally (as per recommendations of Australian Department of Health)
- Mom's Diet should include enough vitamin B12, otherwise the infant may need B12 supplements

Formula:

- Vegan's who want to use formula or supplement should be using Soy Based Formula (up to 2 years of life)
- Foods should be introduced as above, including iron fortified grains and cereals as their first food source
- Children who do not receive iron fortified foods will need to start an iron supplement between 4 months and 6 months

Foods to Avoid:

- Hard nuts or whole nuts under 3years of age - choking hazard
- Unpasteurized milk or cheese under 12 mo of age - risk of infection
- Honey under 12 months of age - risk of infection
- Goats milk/Goat's Milk based formulas under 12 months of age because they can cause anemia
- Soy and other plant based milks should not be given under 12 months of age.

- Between 12 months and 2 years these milks should not be the primary source of milk because they are incomplete, continue to supplement with breast milk or formula (if patient is vegan).
- Fruit juices are not recommended or necessary <12 months (exceptions include constipation) - really none of us need fruit juices
- Soft Drinks and other sugary beverages are not recommended

July 2013:

There is currently a controversy online over rice cereal having inorganic arsenic in it. Many mothers therefore are choosing to start with oatmeal or other cereals. On the other side of the argument, rice producers state that arsenic is a naturally occurring substance in the soil. However arsenic has been linked with an increased risk of cancer.

It seems that rice can absorb inorganic arsenic from the water and since it is often grown in fields where cotton used to be grown, a lot of the domestic rice supply is contaminated.

Also rice is also an unrefined carbohydrate and is not that healthy anyway - so it makes sense to limit the amount of rice in children's diets and our own as well. (Of note: Brown rice actually has higher levels of inorganic arsenic.)

Here's what Consumer Reports recommends for upper limits for children (serving sizes are uncooked):

- Infant cereal (1/4 cup): one serving a day
- Hot cereal (1/4 cup): 1 3/4 servings a week
- Rice-based ready-to-eat cereal (1 cup): 1 1/2 servings a week
- Rice drink (like rice milk): none
- Rice (1/4 cup): 1 1/4 servings a week
- Rice pasta (2 oz): 1 1/2 servings a week
- Rice crackers: 8-9 crackers a day
- Rice cakes (1-3): 1 serving a week

