



Introducing Solids

At some point between 4 and 6 months, you may notice that your baby is watching you eat with great interest and that she may even be trying to direct some of your food into her mouth. It's time to break out the spoon and the bib - it's about to get messy!

Why does my baby need solids?

- After six months of breast or bottle, your baby's iron stores will be low. She needs to start a solid food diet to build her iron supply.
- Her rapid growth and development means that she now needs more energy than she can get from the bottle or breast alone.
- By six months, your baby will be getting hungry! You may find that your baby who's been happily sleeping starts waking again for [night feeds](#).
- Your baby needs to learn how to use her mouth to develop eating skills and to experience new textures and tastes. Starting solids will also help her [developing teeth](#) and jaw.

REMEMBER!

Solid food won't replace the breast or bottle for many, many months.

How do I know when my baby's ready for solid food?

It's usually quite obvious! Your baby will start throwing you clues that she wants more in her mouth than milk when:

- She becomes interested in what you're eating and starts making a grab for it, or she start putting her fingers into her mouth
- She opens her mouth if you offer her a spoonful of food
- She starts 'munching' on her gums
- She starts waking at night needing an extra feed
- She has strong neck and head control

Can she choke?

If your baby isn't ready for solid food, you'll find that her tongue will push all the food straight out at you. By six months, most babies have enough tongue control to move food (well, some it anyway!) around their mouth before swallowing. Choking on appropriately soft or pureed baby foods is unlikely.

To avoid the possibility of choking, don't feed your baby anything hard such as:

- pieces of raw carrot and apple
- popcorn
- fish or meat with small bones
- hard sweets
- nuts