

# First Foods and Early Foods

## Experts on First Foods

As a preventive measure, breastfeeding promotes improved health outcomes for baby and mother and is cost-effective.

Infants who were breastfed for a minimum of 6 months experienced \$1,435.00 less health care claims than formula fed infants, according to Kaiser Permanente's Study on Breastfeeding and Health.

## Economic of Breastfeeding

For families, the purchase of infant formula can amount to \$1,500-\$2,000 or more for the baby's first year. This figure does not include the cost of other needs such as bottles, nipples, or maybe special formulas like soy, etc.

According to the Center for Disease Control, children who aren't breast-fed are at higher risk for obesity, diabetes, respiratory and ear infections, eczema, and tend to require more doctor visits, hospitalizations and prescriptions.

Breastfed children are less likely to be overweight or obese and there is more likely to be fewer doctors' visits which in turn are fewer hours away from work.

Source: United States Breastfeeding Committee

## Benefits of Breastfeeding

### The Baby will be less likely to have ~

- ❖ Childhood overweight and obesity
- ❖ Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)
- ❖ Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- ❖ Asthma
- ❖ Allergies
- ❖ Lymphomas and Leukemia (cancers)
- ❖ Autoimmune Thyroid Disease
- ❖ Type I and Type II Diabetes
- ❖ Ulcerative Colitis
- ❖ Crohn's Disease
- ❖ Multiple Sclerosis
- ❖ Poor school performance

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### The Mother will be less likely to have~

- ❖ Premenopausal breast cancer
- ❖ Ovarian cancer
- ❖ Thyroid cancer
- ❖ Osteoporosis
- ❖ Lupus

Source: United States Breastfeeding Committee

## Early Foods

### Self-Regulation

Many pediatricians suggest early introduction of solid foods may lead to obesity later in life due to the lack of self-regulation. Your baby needs to be able to learn for him or herself when he or she is full. In the past, this type of information, based on scientific research, was unavailable to parents.

### Introducing Solid Foods

Babies who are fed solid foods earlier than 6 months of age may lack the ability to regulate how much solid food they are eating. As you are feeding your baby, you control the amounts that your baby is eating. Until a baby is able to clearly indicate that he or she is full (either by turning away from the spoon, batting the spoon away or clamping the mouth closed for example), the risk of overfeeding solids is high.

### Over-Feeding

Parents need to pay close attention to their babies' cues particularly if they are introducing solids early. Why it is that once baby turns **6 months** of age, suddenly a baby is ready for solids?

- ❖ Baby's intestines should be fully "closed".
- ❖ Babies are less likely to aspirate foods.
- ❖ Baby is better able to recognize that she is full

and regulate how much she needs to eat.

- ❖ Baby is able to indicate she is full by turning away from food.
- ❖ Baby should have fully developed head control and be able to sit up with minimal assistance.

There are many reasons that **12 months** is the age for introducing "forbidden" solids.

- ❖ Baby's system is less likely to think that foreign proteins, like the egg protein, need to be considered invaders and fought off.
- ❖ Baby has been sensitized to a variety of foods and allergies are less likely to be induced.
- ❖ Baby's development is such that some forbidden foods, cow's milk for example, will not adversely affect health.
- ❖ Baby's gastrointestinal system is better able to process pathogens, such as botulism spores in honey.

Source: Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics

### What Foods to Start With?

A common first baby food is a single-whole grain, iron-fortified cereal such as rice cereal or oatmeal. These baby cereals have the advantage of boosting your baby's iron intake, and they're easy to digest. Just mix with a little baby formula, breast milk, or even water on occasion.

In addition to baby cereal, you can start your baby out with pureed fruits and vegetables. What kind? It doesn't matter, as long as you offer a variety. Options include carrots, pears, prunes, sweet potatoes, avocado, bananas, peaches, and much more. You can either buy premade baby food or make your own.

Some parents think that you should offer fruit before vegetables so the baby doesn't reject the veggies for the sweeter fruits, but that's not how it works. All babies have a preference for sweet tastes; you should keep giving them both fruits and vegetables.

What if your baby rejects the new food? You need not worry about rejection just try the food again later. You might want to wait a few days until your baby has forgotten the experience. It's not so much that they hate the food - it's just that it's unfamiliar to them.

