



DEPARTMENT OF ALLERGY & IMMUNOLOGY

ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, MELBOURNE

INFANT FEEDING GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTION OF ALLERGIC DISEASE

- This information sheet contains guidelines for feeding infants who are at higher risk for developing allergic disease because of a **family history of allergic disease** (such as asthma, eczema, hay fever or food allergies in one or both parents, or in a sibling).
- Some allergy experts believe that if you follow certain guidelines regarding breastfeeding and the cautious and systematic introduction of solids, it may be possible to reduce the risk of allergic conditions.
- It is important to note that these guidelines are only intended for infants with a history of allergic disease in the immediate family; and **not** as a general approach for all babies.
- Even if you implement all of these recommendations, your child may still develop an allergic disease.

Maternal Diet during Pregnancy

- Changing or restricting a mother's diet whilst she is pregnant has **not** been shown to reduce the risk of food allergy development for the baby and is therefore **not recommended**.

Breastfeeding

- Where possible breastfeed your child. Breastfeeding provides a nutritious and balanced food source for your baby and also provides protection from infections. Exclusively breastfeeding your baby for the first 4–6 months of life may reduce the chances of your baby developing some forms of allergic disease.
- Maternal dietary restrictions during breastfeeding are **not recommended** for allergy prevention.

Infant Formula

- **Partially hydrolysed formulas** (Nan HA and Karicare Sensikare) are available without prescription in pharmacies and supermarkets. These formulas may be used in babies at higher risk of developing allergic disease if you are unable to breastfeed your baby and you wish to follow the recommendations for reducing the risk of allergic disease in your baby. These formulae are **not suitable** for infants with established food allergies.
- **Soy and goat's milk** based formula are **not recommended** for prevention of food allergy.

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Infant Feeding Guidelines for the Prevention of Allergic Diseases (continued)

INTRODUCING SOLIDS

- Start to introduce solids when your baby is around 4 – 6 months old.
- At present there is **no evidence that restricting certain foods beyond 6 months** of age has a protective effect against the development of allergic disease.
- Foods may be introduced into the diet in stages as outlined below. These recommendations are very similar to the introduction of solids guidelines for all babies. In general, early foods include iron fortified infant cereal, smooth cooked vegetables and fruit, followed by meats and other vegetables, wheat, cow's milk and egg.
- When introducing new foods always introduce **one new food at a time**. Start with **small amounts** (1 teaspoon) and allow at least **2 days** before trying another new food. This makes it easier to determine if your child has had a reaction and to which food. If there is a reaction then stop the new food and do not try any new foods until symptoms have settled. If frequent reactions occur, consult your doctor or dietitian.
- The following table is a guide for which foods to introduce and in what order. It may take a little longer to move through all stages than for other babies the same age.

AGE	FOODS
Around 6 months	<p>Stage 1 <i>Smooth puree texture</i> Plain baby rice cereal (eg. Heinz or Farex) Smooth, cooked vegetables: potato, zucchini, sweet potato, pumpkin Smooth, cooked fruit: apple, pear</p> <p>Stage 2 <i>Move on to a mashed texture. Finger foods can be introduced</i> Lamb, chicken and then other meats Other vegetables: peas, beans, broccoli, cauliflower, carrot, corn etc. Other fruits: peaches, apricots, avocado, nectarine, mango, melon fruits, banana, grapes etc (try citrus, berry, kiwi fruit and tomato last) Other cereals: rice, pure corn flour, rye, millet, oats (porridge)</p> <p>Stage 3 <i>Move on to a chopped texture. Drinks can be offered from a cup</i> Dried beans and lentils Wheat e.g. bread, crackers, pasta, wheat based breakfast cereals Cows milk on cereal, yoghurt, cheese and custard Egg (cooked yolk first, then whole egg) Fish</p> <p>Stage 4 Whole cow's milk to drink (from 12 months) Nuts and nut products such as nut pastes (care should be taken with the introduction of WHOLE nuts due to the risk of choking) Shellfish (prawns, scallops, crab, lobster, crayfish)</p>

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