

# When Can Baby Eat...

As you start introducing your little one to solid foods, you might find yourself wondering if it's safe to bring certain things into the mix just yet. Is baby old enough for beef? Is it too soon for pasta? Fresh fruit might be fine, but what about raisins? Here's a quick guideline to make things easier.

## Did you know?

In the 1960s, some doctors were suggesting that babies should be eating solid foods at only a few days old.



## IN GENERAL:

A family history of asthma, eczema or food allergies is a sign that you should take it slow with possible allergens. When in doubt, talk to your doctor. It's always better to start with a small sample, both in case baby doesn't like the new food and so that a bad reaction is smaller.

## Did you know?

Baby food from shops half as nutritious as homemade meals, study finds. Manufactured baby foods contain high levels of sugar and are promoted for use when infants should be on milk, scientists say.



**APPLES:** Right away! Since they're so easy to make into applesauce, apples are a common first food.



**CHEESE:** Depending on your little one's known allergies, anywhere from 6 to 12 months. Cheese is full of great nutrients, and the chemical responsible for dairy allergies is mostly broken down, so start early if baby hasn't had major problems.



**CURRY:** It sounds weird, but curry is actually a good way to introduce baby to a lot of flavors and tastes at once – as early as 7 to 10 months! Start with korma or another relatively non-spicy variety.



**EGGS:** Yolk is fine at 9 months, but hold off on egg whites until 12 months or so, and watch for allergic reactions.

## Did you know?

In 1867 Henre Nestle of Switzerland invented the first artificial infant food, Nestle's Milk Food.



**FISH:** Canned tuna and other non-boney fish (those fall under the same guidelines as shellfish) can be brought into baby's diet as early as 6 months, in small amounts; the main recommendation is to wait until 12 months. Make sure the fish you buy has low levels of mercury!



**HONEY:** After 12 months, but not because of allergies this time. Honey can contain spores of bacteria that cause botulism, and exposing baby to that before their immune system is up to the task can be dangerous, if not outright lethal.



**MEAT:** You can start with pureed meat (beef or poultry) right from the beginning. If you started with fruits and vegetables, adding those to a meat puree might help your little one adjust to the new taste. Don't give them chunks of meat to chew on until they're eating other chewy foods without choking.



**PASTA:** Pasta can enter the mealtime picture as early as 8 months, as long as your little one hasn't shown signs of gluten intolerance, since most pasta is made from wheat.



**PEANUTS:** One of the most common allergy triggers out there, peanuts are a tricky one, with some doctors recommending waiting until your child is 7 years old to introduce! If you want to try them sooner, talk to your doctor first. Another reason to be careful with peanut butter in particular is how sticky it is; young mouths might have trouble swallowing it.



**RAISINS:** Dried fruit is tricky for babies to chew, so you may want to hold off until your child's doing better with chewing on other finger foods. However, there's no reason not to puree them into other foods as early as 6 months.



**SHELLFISH:** Another big allergy trigger. It's safest to wait until after 12 months to introduce shellfish; if your child's shown signs of other food allergies, you may want to wait as long as 3 years.



**TREE NUTS:** Almonds, cashews, walnuts, and other tree nuts are best introduced after 12 months, if baby's not showing any signs of food allergies. If they are, you might be better off waiting until 24 or even 36 months.



**VEGETABLES:** Peas, carrots, sweet potatoes, and other veggies are also great first foods! Contrary to a number of parenting myths, it doesn't actually matter whether you start with vegetables or fruits when you introduce baby to solids; one won't make them hate the other forever.

## Did you know?

In 1928, spinach is one of the first baby foods produced by the famous Gerber Company.



**WHEAT:** 7 to 9 months, provided your child hasn't had a bad reaction to rice, oats, or other grains. Start small to avoid spurring baby into a wheat or gluten allergy!



**YOGURT:** As early as 6 months, if your child hasn't already been diagnosed with a dairy allergy. Start with plain yogurt, then use it as a vehicle to introduce other foods.