

# Transition to Solids

## A Guide to Baby-Led Weaning

### When is Baby Ready for Solids?

Most babies are ready to try solids around 6 months. Some babies are ready as early as 4 months or as late as 7 months, but you will know when your baby is ready because they will:

- Sit up without support
- Grab and hold items
- Purposefully guide objects to mouth

Sometimes baby's activities make us think they are ready earlier - these are "false cues." These may be a part of baby's development, but not a cue to begin solids.

#### False Cues:

- Watching others eat
- Waking at night
- Slow weight gain
- Lip smacking
- Not falling asleep while nursing or feeding

### How to Start Feeding Solids

- Continue breastfeeding and/or iron-fortified formula; offer first bites between breastfeeding or bottles.
- Baby begins by joining the family for meals. Keep screens off to help baby enjoy the family and the meal.
- In the beginning, this is more about exploring foods. Do not worry if baby does not eat much.
- Use small bites and soft foods to begin; offer water if needed.
- **Let baby feed themselves – let baby decide how much they want to eat and how quickly.**
- Offer water with solids. Once baby is 9 months or older, offer water in a sippy cup.

#### What?

- **Soft, cooked vegetables** – Vegetables should be soft enough to eat, but not too soft, so that they crumble. Try carrots or broccoli to start.
- **Roasted, peeled vegetables** - potato wedges and sweet potato.
- **Ripe, soft fresh fruit** - pear, banana, mango and avocado.
- **Meat and Fish** – Make it easy enough for baby to pick up and chew. Typically, baby will suck on meat and spit out remainder until they are older and can chew better. Avoid lumps.
- **Beans** – rinse soft beans and mash them with a fork to get rid of larger lumps.

*These handouts are the property of the Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics and the Ohio Department of Health and may not be altered without express permission.*



#### Where?

- At the table with a high chair or booster seat.
- Baby's exploration is good for their development but may not be for your carpeted floor. Embrace the mess! Put an old shower curtain or towel down.

#### How to Continue?

- Offer a new food every other day. Make foods different colors, textures, smells, or add herbs.
- Offer foods that were spit out other days. Remember new flavors sometimes take multiple tries before baby likes them.
- Gradually move baby from sippy cup to a regular cup by age 12-18 months. Sippy cups may be used for water to avoid messes during play.

### What About Choking?

It is important to know that choking is different from gagging.

- Gagging is baby's normal safety response preventing the food from moving too far back in the throat.
- Choking is when food blocks baby's airway. Baby starts to look panicked, stops making sounds, and may be turning blue.
- To avoid choking, be sure that:
  - baby is always sitting up and not leaning when they are eating.
  - foods served are soft and cut into small bites.
- If baby is choking, follow standard infant CPR practices.

**Want more info? Visit our mobile app at**  
**PMP.ohioaap.org**