
Introducing Solids: Baby Led Weaning

The difference between BLW and conventional spoon-feeding:

Spoon feeding teaches babies to swallow first, then chew. BLW teaches to chew first, then swallow. BLW lets baby control the food, practice motor skills, and try more foods earlier.

Babies can't read calendars. Watch for signs of readiness instead.

- Baby can sit up *without* support. This means independently getting to a seated position.
- Baby has lost their tongue-thrust reflex.
- Baby is ready and willing to chew.
- Baby is developing a pincer grasp (holding things between thumb and forefinger)
- Baby is eager to participate in mealtime.

"Food Before 1 Is Just for Fun!"

- Your baby's stomach is only the size of their fist!
- Nurse first if you're worried about your milk supply, about 30-60 minutes before meals
- An average "serving" of solids is only 1/2 tablespoon.
- Baby is still being exposed to colors, smells, textures, and flavors, even if not ingesting much food.

What are NOT indicators that baby is ready for solids?

- Baby watches you eat
- Baby does or doesn't have teeth
- Baby is large/a certain weight OR baby is small
- Baby could have low iron
- Baby isn't sleeping well at night

Getting Started - Basic Prep and Concepts

- Rule number 1: You do not put anything into baby's mouth.
- Rule number 2: Baby does not eat unsupervised.
- If baby isn't quite ready, put him or her in the highchair and give a spoon to play with
- We eat pureed foods, too - offer thicker foods or a pre-loaded spoon
- Start offering water with food, 1-2 ounces in a bottle or straw cup

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How Many Meals Per Day?

- Offer new foods in the morning if possible to avoid sleep interruptions
- If baby gags a lot at first, you can always slow down or back off for a few days
- Start off with one new food every 2-3 days in case of reaction

Baby's First Foods

- larger pieces are actually easier to hold (picture steak fries or a pencil)
- able to squish food easily between two fingers
- think mostly cooked foods (cucumber and ripe pear are early exceptions)

Foods to Avoid

- salt, baby cereals, cow's milk and juice, honey
- whole nuts, grapes, cherry tomatoes, hot dogs, and popcorn

Allergy Concerns

These 8 allergens account for about 90% of all reactions.

Dairy, eggs, fish, peanuts, shellfish, soy, tree nuts, wheat

Signs of a Reaction (an intolerance is not an allergy!):

- Sudden loose, diarrhea stools and/or vomiting
- Sudden rashes on the skin and bottom
- Runny nose
- Hives (irregular red patches with raised white bumps)
- Irritability and/or gassiness after a new food/meal
- Breathing or other respiratory troubles after a new food/meal
- Swelling of the face, lips and/or tongue
- Closure or tightening of the throat
- Eczema

Iron-Rich Food Ideas:

- Sesame seeds, black beans, chickpeas, kale and spinach, lentils, sunflower seeds, kidney beans, dried apricots, lima beans, soybeans, liver, duck, lamb, blackstrap molasses
- Combine iron-rich foods with vitamin C for best absorption (broccoli, bell peppers, citrus)
- Don't pair with dairy which inhibits absorption

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Binding Foods and Constipation:

- Binding foods: banana, applesauce, grains (rice, bread, pasta, cereal), and dairy
- If baby gets constipated, I advise backing off from food before adding more in
- Nurse more, offer water, do clockwise tummy massage, bicycle legs, and a warm bath
- "P" foods: prunes, pears, and peaches, dried fruit, soaked chia seeds, or coconut oil (older kids)
- Magnesium oil or an epsom salt bath can also help
- A white outfit for scheduling family photos are a good last resort before anal stimulation

Things You're Allowed to Worry About:

- continued tongue thrust reflex after 6 months
- gagging/vomiting when seeing/touching foods, especially if it's almost always with a specific texture, color, or flavor
- anxious behavior such as pushing away or arching back from food
- refusal to touch food or put food or toys in mouth

Baby Gear You "Need"

- high chair or booster seat (IKEA, Keekaroo, Stokke, or Fisher Price booster seat)
- pouch bibs (DexDura)
- bowls and spoons (Cost Plus World Market, bamboo utensils)
- water bottle or straw cup (thinkbaby, ZoliBot, open cup, Avent 360)
- Squeasy!

Recommended Reading:

Baby-Led Weaning by Gill Rapley

Child of Mine by Ellyn Satter

Your baby wants to eat what YOU eat, not what you give them.

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6-8 months	7-9 months	8-10 months	10-12 months
~5% of calories from solids	~6-8% of calories from solids	~7-9% of calories from solids	~10-20% of calories from solids
Apple, avocado, banana, pear	Apricots, cantaloupe, mango, nectarines, peaches, plums, watermelon	Blueberries, cherries, dates, figs, kiwi, papaya, persimmons, prunes, sliced grapes	Berries, citrus
Carrots, squash, sweet potato	Beets, broccoli, cucumbers, cauliflower, green beans, peas, zucchini	Asparagus, eggplant, fennel, mushrooms, onions, peppers	Cabbage, spinach, tomatoes
Scrambled eggs cut in strips, soft shredded meat	Poultry, tofu (cooked or uncooked)	Beans, fish; (if desired) grains and pasta, whole milk yogurt and firm cheese	Smoothies, corn, grains and dairy if desired

Some Meal Ideas

Breakfast:

- fresh fruit, scrambled eggs or omelets (cut in strips), oatmeal (rolled or steel cut), plain full-fat yogurt, waffles or pancakes (cut into strips), toast (cut into sticks), green or fruit smoothies

Lunch:

- homemade soup (*though we often did this before bedtime*), sauteed carrots (cut in sticks) in butter or olive oil, roasted sweet potato "fries", roasted squash, sauteed or steamed green beans, quesadillas cut in strips

Dinner:

- pasta with veggies or relatively plain (no super salty sauces), shredded meat, liver, fish, or meat on the bone, rice and beans, steamed or roasted broccoli, grilled cheese

Snacks:

- roasted seaweed, puffs or cereal, unsalted pretzels, unsalted rice cakes, applesauce, avocado, hummus

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Jessica's Balls!

- Ground meat of your choice (turkey, beef, pork, bison)
- Roasted sweet potato
- Herbs or spices if desired

Scoop out sweet potato, mix with ground meat and spices if using. Form into balls (use a tablespoon measuring spoon) and place on a baking sheet. Bake at 350 until done. Serve once cooled to safe temp. Freeze for later use.

More questions? Specific situations?

Personalized phone/video consultations are also available.

--- Visit **semicrunchymama.com/blwconsultation**

Join my Facebook group at <http://semicrunchymama.com/group>

For other resources and events like **Semi-Crunchy Mama** on Facebook!

Semi-Crunchy Mama™ Circle is the 2nd Friday of each month.

****After a few months, you may need your carpets/floors cleaned.****

Call Robert at Steam vs. Soil (619) 458-1923

Want email updates about other events? Text SEMICRUNCHY to 444999
