

Manhattan Pediatrics, PC

Starting Table Foods (8-10 months)

By 8 months old your baby should be comfortable with eating purees/stage 1-2 foods, have experienced a variety of flavors (cereal, fruits, veggies) and be up to 2-3 meals per day. He or she should also be developing a pincer grasp (holding objects between thumb and forefinger). If so, it's time to start finger foods!

How to introduce junior and finger foods:

You can start with more coarse-textured purees (make your own or buy premade stage 3 foods). These will teach the baby to start chewing and manipulating the food more in the mouth.

Next try a "teething" biscuit or baby rice cracker (Zweibach, Earth's Best, Mum-Mum). If the baby can handle this (not gag), you can try other finger foods. As a general rule, if you can break up a food into pieces without a utensil, a baby can mash it with his or her gums (no need for teeth). Such foods include cheerios/puffs, bread, well-cooked pasta, small pieces of very ripe banana and avocado, other fruits and vegetables cooked well and cut into small pieces, tofu, shredded bits of chicken or flaked fish (no shellfish and watch for bones).

Yogurt and soft pasteurized cheeses can also be introduced around 9 months of age. Start with full-fat plain or vanilla yogurt – no reason to buy sweet "baby" yogurts. Eggs yolk can be introduced closer to 1 year. Make sure you have liquid Benadryl on hand should he/she have an allergic reaction, such as hives, after eggs.

Try to offer a mix of puree and finger foods at each meal, and allow your baby to feed himself the finger foods with his hands. Expect a bit of a mess!

Foods to avoid until after 12 months:

Honey: may contain botulism spores

Allergenic foods: Egg white, nut products, shellfish

Beverages:

If you started a cup at 6 months of age, by now your baby might have figured it out! Offer the cup at meals with water and then formula or expressed breast milk. Children need fluoride, which they get from tap water in New York. If you don't trust your building's tap water, you can get bottled water with fluoride. You can offer a maximum of 4oz per day of pure fruit juice, but this is not necessary.

Enjoy