

# The Cooper Pediatrics Infant Feeding Guide

## 1) Introduction

The Cooper Pediatrics Infant Feeding Guide is a collection of current guidelines of ways to safely introduce foods to your baby. Until recently, pediatricians advised parents to delay introducing the highly “allergenic foods” (such as eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish) until at least a year of age. However, current scientific studies have shown that early introduction of allergenic foods may decrease an infant’s risk of developing food allergies! These handouts reflect these new recommendations.

## 2) When should I introduce solid foods to my infant?

The best time to start solid foods is when your infant is between 4-6 months old and had met the appropriate developmental milestones listed in the [4-6 Month Old Feeding Handout](#). Note, although the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for six months, it is acceptable to start solids earlier (4-6 months) if desired.

## 3) How often do I introduce new foods?

“The Three Day Rule”: Introduce only one new food (single ingredient) at a time. After you introduce your baby to a new food, do not introduce another new food for at least three days and watch carefully for signs of allergies. During this waiting period, feed him a variety of foods to which he has been previously introduced as well as some of the new food.

## 4) Is my baby considered at high risk for food allergies?

If your infant is being treated for atopic dermatitis/eczema or has a sibling or parent with food allergies, it is very important to share this information with your pediatrician. The timing or method of introducing the allergenic foods (eggs, nuts, fish) may need to be individualized for your infant.

### **5) What are the signs of food allergies?**

- a) Allergy symptoms can occur in almost any part of the body, but most commonly they manifest in the ☐ Digestive tract (vomiting, diarrhea), Respiratory system (wheezing, cough, hoarseness), The skin (eye swelling, lip swelling, hives, eczema)
- b) If your baby has a severe allergic reaction to a new food such as wheezing, difficulty breathing, or swelling of lips or tongue, Call 911. Give a dose of Benadryl.
- c) If your baby has a mild reaction to a new food or if you are not certain, please call our office.

### **6) Is it true that starting babies with fruits before vegetables will lead to a “sweet tooth” and a later refusal of vegetables?**

No. Your infant will tolerate fruits and vegetables equally well. Sometimes your baby will spit out new foods, and it may take 5-10 days of trying a new food before the food is accepted. Do not interpret early food refusal as a disliking of the new food. Be patient.

### **7) Is my baby eating enough? How can I tell?**

- a) Cues that your baby is hungry: Turns toward food. Opens mouth when sees food. Gets excited when sees food.
- b) Cues that you baby has had enough to eat: Turns head away. Does not open mouth. Pushes spoon away.
- c) Never force food into your baby’s mouth. Trust your baby to let you know how much he wants to eat.
- d) Try not to compare your baby to other babies. Healthy babies come in all weights, shapes, and sizes. They grow and gain weight at different rates.

### **8) What is the most important principle of infant and child feeding?**

a) Division of Responsibility: The parent is responsible for what, when and where the child is fed. The child is always responsible for how much to eat and whether to eat the foods offered by the parent.

b) Your baby's interest in eating will depend on many factors: Amount of fluid receiving in diet. Rate of growth. Mood or feelings at the time of feeding. Distractions in the environment. The time of day.

### **9) Does my baby need vitamins?**

a) Vitamin D drops (D-Vi-Sol, one ml daily) are recommended for all infants under one year of age who are solely breastfed or receiving < 32 ounces of formula per day.

b) Breastfed infants need additional iron starting at four months. Unless your infant is eating iron-fortified cereals or red meats at this time, start "Poly-Vi-Sol with Iron" (and discontinue the D-Vi-Sol).

### **10) Additional notes and recommendations:**

a) Honey is not safe for babies under one year of age as it can cause infant botulism.

b) While commercial baby food products are fine, making your own is easy and fun. We recommend, Super Baby Food by Ruth Yaron, 3rd Edition.

c) All caretakers (grandparents, babysitters...) should know how to manage a choking baby? To purchase a 20 minutes refresher on CPR, visit [www.cpranytime.org](http://www.cpranytime.org)