

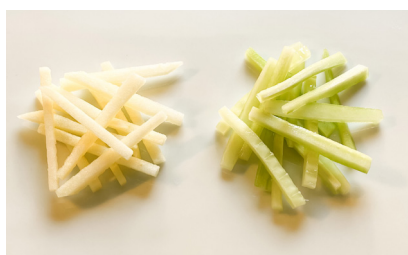
# RAISING ADVENTUROUS EATERS with first foods

Keeping your baby safe while eating is a top priority. Here are safe eating tips to address some of the most common questions parents and caregivers might encounter from the start of introducing solid foods through the first year of your baby's life.



## How to Serve Foods Safely

To determine if a food is safe for your baby to eat, ask yourself: Can baby break it down easily with just their gums? Is it easily squished between your finger and thumb? In addition to offering pureed or blended foods, here are 6 ways to cut soft and safe foods for baby:



**MATCHSTICKS:** Soft, fresh foods with skins removed and cut into small, manageable slivers (example: peeled fresh cucumber or apple)



**HANDHELDS:** Larger but very soft pieces held in baby's entire hand to explore and bite (example: chunks of roasted butternut squash)



**SHREDDED:** Offer moist, tender foods that pull apart easily into tiny shreds. (example: soft cooked ground beef or salmon)



**SMASHED:** A quick "smash" on a round food can prevent choking yet still allow baby to pick it up with ease. Smashed foods can also be presented on a preloaded utensil for self-feeding (example: cooked beans or soft sweet potato)



**PINKY STRIPS:** Soft, moist foods that baby can gnaw and still manage small pieces that break off. Tip! Roll in breadcrumbs to make the food less slippery for baby's grasp. (example: strips of roasted zucchini or avocado)



**PEA-SIZED CUBES:** Baby will rake up a few soft cubes at this age. Offer soft fresh foods or cooked foods, never offer hard cubes (e.g., hard cheeses) that could lodge in baby's airway if accidentally swallowed whole. (example: kiwi or soft melon)



## What To Avoid Before 1 Year

**FOODS:** Some foods have a higher risk for food poisoning and severe illness in young children with developing immune systems. These foods to avoid include honey, deli meats (hot dogs, salami, bologna, deli turkey, etc.), raw or undercooked eggs or meats, and unpasteurized or raw dairy products or cheeses. Items with milk products should say "pasteurized milk" in the ingredient list on the label.

**BEVERAGES:** A baby's primary source of nutrition and hydration in the first year is breast milk and/or infant formula. Plain water may be introduced in small amounts starting at 6 months. Other types of beverages such as milk, juice, and sugar sweetened drinks should not be offered to babies under the age of 12 months.

This guide is provided by:



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### Choking vs Gagging: Keeping an Eye on Baby

- Gagging is nature's way of trying to protect your baby's airway. For babies who are just starting solids, gagging is a natural response to new tastes, new textures, and subtle temperature changes.
- A choking child may appear panicked, wide-eyed with an open mouth and drooling, and progressing to bluish skin in or around their lips, gums, fingernails, or eyes. Audible gasps, faint noises, or wheezing may be detected, but typically there is little sound because the airway is blocked. Ask your pediatrician about CPR training in your area before starting solid foods with your baby.
- Common food choking hazards to avoid: whole nuts and seeds (peanuts, sunflower seeds, almonds), hard uncooked vegetables (carrots, celery), round foods (whole blueberries, grapes, or beans), popcorn, hot dogs, hard fresh fruit (chunks of apple), large chunks of cheese (string cheese), spoonfuls of nut and seed butters (undiluted peanut butter), candy (hard candy, jelly beans, fruit snacks).



### Pacifier and Feeding Development

- During the first 6 months, pacifiers are helpful for soothing and decreasing the chance of SIDS, the sudden, unexpected and unexplained death of an apparently healthy baby. Extended use may lead to feeding and swallowing problems and can pose a safety risk. It could even impact your baby's facial development.
  - ◇ Stop daytime use of the pacifier by 6 months of age to avoid mouth injuries from falling with a pacifier in the mouth.
  - ◇ Stop using a pacifier for naps/nighttime around 12 months. This will help them develop a mature swallow pattern to safely advance to a variety of textured foods.

### top 9 food allergens



### Food Allergens

Between 6-12 months, one by one, introduce the top 9 food allergens, foods that have the highest rates of food allergies, including dairy, egg, peanut, tree nut, soy, wheat, fish, shellfish, and sesame. Research shows that early exposure, and continued regular exposure, helps to reduce the risk of developing severe food allergies.

*\*Talk to your pediatrician if you have concerns about introducing these foods or if you have a family history of food allergies.*

- Make these foods baby friendly. For example, take a teaspoon of smooth peanut butter and dilute it in a teaspoon or more of warm water so it is not as sticky and thick, which could be a choking hazard
- Ideally, pick a time when your baby will be awake for about two hours so that you can monitor for reactions. Wait at least two to three days between introducing new allergenic foods and watch for symptoms such as:
  - ◇ Skin: rash; itching; swelling of lips, tongue, face
  - ◇ Color Change: bluish, flushed, or pale color. For babies with darker skin, look for color changes in the lips, gums, tongue, and/or fingernails.
  - ◇ Lungs: coughing, wheezing, trouble breathing
  - ◇ Digestive system: vomiting, diarrhea
  - ◇ Nervous system: drowsiness

**Call your baby's doctor with any mild symptoms such as rash or itching. Call 911 or visit the emergency room for any severe reactions.**



The information contained in this guide should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

Contributors: Carmen Berry, MPH, RD, LD; Kofi Essel, MD, MPH, FAAP; Nimali Fernando, MD, MPH, FAAP; Rupa Mahadevan, MD, FAAP, ABOIM; and Melanie Potock, MA, CCC-SLP