



Starting Solids

Starting Solids Guide - Baby's aged 5-7 months

The content in this eBook has been written by Leanne Cooper our Huggies nutritionist. This content is a summary of the information that is included in Leanne's book *What Do I Feed My Baby*. Her book contains lots of comprehensive information on [introducing solids](#) including actual signs of readiness, why solids won't help with sleep, what to do if baby says 'no', what foods at what age and much more.



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The information presented is not intended to replace medical advice, if you have any concern for your infant's or child's health see a qualified health care professional.



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When to start

[The aim of starting solids](#) is to include a wide variety of foods that are in common with other members of the family. These foods will help a growing infant meet their [nutritional needs](#). Remember that iron-deficiency is common in infants around 6–12 months because their own stores of iron begin to diminish. Also keep in mind that introducing solids does not mean weaning a child off the breast or bottle.

Don't start too early

There are a number of reasons why it is not recommended to introduce solids before 16 weeks. In fact, it is best not to start until around 6 months. A baby's digestive system is not yet fully developed (most babies' digestive systems remain inadequate up to about 6 months of age).

An infant's microflora (healthy bowel bacteria) in the intestinal canal and their metabolism also need to develop adequately so that baby can handle the immune challenges of food.

How can we determine when a baby should start solids and progress through to other foods? Quite simply, it's based on their anatomical development. The ability to move food around the mouth, chew it and prepare it to be swallowed is a skill-set we develop over time.

Signs of readiness for solids

[Baby's feeding](#) and mouth motions change from sucking to chomping and then chewing; their tongue no longer protrudes in readiness for fluid. Baby is increasingly able to sit unassisted, allowing better control of the movement and passage of food in the mouth.

What about starting solids to help baby sleep?

[Starting solids](#) to help [baby sleep](#) isn't generally successful: the tiny amount that a baby will eat and the type of foods they start with simply don't compare to the calories and nutrients they gain from a full breastfeed (about 54% fat) or formula feed. You may find introducing an additional feed works better. If baby is temporarily unsettled or going through a fussy stage (which seems to occur at weeks 5, 8, 12, 17 and 26) try to return them to their usual routine with patience and consistency.



About 4-6 months

Commence offering water in a sipper cup at each meal and throughout the day – initially baby may only drink a few.

Day 1-3

Avo starter

2 teaspoons of avocado
Water, breastmilk or formula to thin

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

1. Thoroughly puree the avocado and add small amounts of fluid until you have a thin paste.
2. Offer 1-2 teaspoons or as baby indicates, often dinner time is a good meal to start with.

Notes: Avocado has a similar fatty acid composition to breastmilk so has a good acceptance rate and nutritional content.



Day 4-6

Sweet potato

A little peeled sweet potato
Water, breast milk or formula to thin

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

1. Peel and cook the sweet potato until soft.
2. Puree the sweet potato and then thin with fluid until it is a smooth paste.
3. Offer 1 - 2 teaspoons or as baby indicates.

Notes: Sweet potato is a lovely root veggie that has a low glycaemic index, so lasts longer in baby's tummy.



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Day 7-9

Baby rice cereal (organic ideally)

5 teaspoons (or as required)

of baby cereal

Water, breast milk or formula to thin

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

1. Add the cereal to a clean bowl and mix with fluid until it is a smooth paste.
2. Baby may find this taste quite bland; it is fine to mix with a pre-tested veggie.

Notes: Introduce at 6 months for iron! Baby cereal is generally high GI so mixing it with other food or breast milk or formula can lower this effect. If you find baby doesn't enjoy the taste or texture of baby cereal once you have trialled it you can mix it with one or more of the foods baby has already safely trialled. Until baby is eating meat or a good variety of iron-containing foods offer iron-fortified baby cereal 3-4 times a week.



Day 10-12

Zucchini

½ a zucchini

Water, breast milk or formula to thin

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

1. Wash and steam the zucchini until soft.
2. Puree the zucchini, you are not likely to need fluid due to the high water content, but if you need to thicken the mix use a food you have already introduced without reaction such as sweet potato.
3. Baby may be interested in more than 1-2 teaspoons.

Notes: Still working on veggies and introducing slightly more bitter foods. Don't confuse rejection with dislike!



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Day 13-15

Carrot

½ a carrot

Water, breast milk or formula to thin

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

1. Wash and steam/boil the carrot until soft.
2. Puree the carrot and then thin with fluid until it is a smooth paste.
3. Baby may be working up to 3 - 5 teaspoons now.
4. Baby may be interested in more than 1-2 teaspoons.

Notes: Now working on different textures for baby's mouth to get used to.

Baby may be interested in about 3 - 5 teaspoons now. Some babies may be ready for another meal; you could try adding in a lunch or brekky.



At 6 months

Baby now has three vegies and one fruit (zucchini) plus baby rice cereal in their repertoire

- Avocado
- Sweet potato
- Zucchini
- Carrot
- Baby rice cereal

Notes:

- Start combinations by using one of the foods above and adding a new food.
- Add iron-fortified rice cereal or other acceptable iron source 2 – 3 times per week.
- Initially while bub still relies on breast milk or formula, it maybe easier and more convenient to give the same food for each meal over the three days (checking for reactions). However, for variety, foods that don't require preparation such as baby rice cereal, mashed banana and avocado can be added in order to add variety to the day's meals.
- Adding breast milk or formula to vegies can improve the satiety (feeling of fullness) baby gains from the meal.
- You may like to consider introducing natural unsweetened yoghurt instead of more fruit or vegetables.



Day 16 - 18

Turnip and carrot

1/4 of a turnip
Equal amount of carrot
Water, breast milk or formula to thin

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

1. Wash and steam/boil the carrot and turnip until soft.
2. Puree the vegies and then thin with fluid until it is a smooth paste.
3. Baby may be working up to 2 - 5 tablespoons now.

Notes: Start working in combinations increase variety as the quantity increases.

Day 19 - 21

Choko and sweet potato

1/4 of a choko
Equal amount of sweet potato
Baby rice cereal to thicken

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

1. Wash and steam/boil the vegetables until soft.
2. Puree the vegies and then thicken with baby cereal to make a smooth paste.
3. Baby may be working up to 2 - 5 tablespoons now.

Notes: Choko is quite high GI which is why sweet potato is a good addition to this meal.

After a week or two



Have a look at adding another meal. This is where frozen stocks of food can be very handy. You can offer the same meal over the day as shown in day 22 - 24 or you can vary it, by creating combinations from the foods baby has already trialled safely.

Once you start with additional meals you can:

- offer the same meal for the second meal (as shown in day 22-24) or offer a different second meal as shown in day 25-27), the latter offers more variety
- create new combinations over the three trial days by using foods you have already introduced successfully along with the new food.

Day 22 – 24 Meal 1

Yoghurt and zucchini

1/2 of a natural unsweetened yoghurt
1/4 of a zucchini
Water, breastmilk or formula to thin

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

- Wash and steam/boil the veggies until soft.
- Add yoghurt to the vegies until it is a smooth paste.
- Baby may be working up to 1/4 cup.

Notes: Natural yoghurt is excellent for baby's intestinal health.

Second meal option

Yoghurt and zucchini

1/2 of a natural unsweetened yoghurt
1/4 of a zucchini
Water, breastmilk or formula to thin

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

- Wash and steam/boil the veggies until soft.
- Add yoghurt to the vegies until it is a smooth paste.
- Baby may be working up to 1/4 cup.

Day 25 – 27 Meal 1

Apple, carrot, yoghurt and rice cereal

3 small florets of broccoli
1/4 cup of chopped sweet potato
A little yoghurt

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

- Wash and steam/boil the veggies until soft.
- Add yoghurt and rice cereal to the vegies until it is a smooth paste.
- Baby may be working up to a cup.

Notes: Broccoli is one of the top anti-cancer foods. Consider thickening baby's solids now by fork mashing the food.

Second meal option

Avocado, carrot and rice cereal

1/2 an avocado mashed
1/4 cup of chopped carrot
Rice cereal to thicken

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

- Wash and steam/boil the veggies until soft.
- Thicken vegies with avocado and cereal until it is a smooth paste.
- Baby may be working up to a cup.

Day 28 - 30 Meal 1

Banana, yoghurt and rice cereal

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

1/2 a banana, mashed
1/4 cup of avocado
2 tsp natural unsweetened yoghurt

1. Mash the fruit until fine.
2. Mix in yoghurt and cereal.
3. Thin down with water, breastmilk or formula if needed.
4. Baby may be working up to a cup.

Notes: Begin to introduce a little fruit in a meal; banana is great because it requires no preparation and is very portable.



Second meal option

Potato, carrot and grated cheese

1/2 a potato
1/4 cup of chopped carrot
2 teaspoons grated cheese

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

1. Wash and steam/boil the vegies until soft.
2. Add cheese until melted.
3. Mix in baby rice cereal.
4. Thin out the mix water/formula or breast milk if required until it is a rough paste.

Day 31 - 33 Meal 1

Broccoli, sweet potato and turnip

Milk feeds

3-5 over the day

1/2 a peeled apple
1/4 cup of chopped carrot
1/4 cup of chopped zucchini
A little baby rice cereal

1. Wash and steam/boil the vegies and apple until soft.
2. Thicken the vegies and fruit with baby rice cereal until it is a rough paste.



Second meal option

Avocado, carrot, yoghurt, sweetcorn and rice cereal

1/2 an avocado mashed

Milk feeds

1/4 cup of chopped carrot
1/4 cup of sweetcorn (tinned is fine)
2 tsp natural unsweetened yoghurt

1. Wash and steam/boil the vegies until soft.
2. Thicken the vegies with avocado cereal until it is a rough paste.
3. Add yoghurt.
4. Baby may be working up to a cup or more.

How are you both going? Fruit and veg checklist

Use this checklist of vegetables and fruit (which is roughly divided by colour) to see how you and bub are progressing through the vegetables and if you are erring towards one group over another. You should also use this to plan meals for the next few weeks up to around 7 months.

Vegetables	✓ or X	Notes
Carrots		
Sweet potato		
Pumpkin		
Broccoli		
Beans		
Kale		
Peas		
Zucchini		
Peas		
Green capsicum (really a fruit)		
Red capsicum (really a fruit)		
Beetroot		
Parsnip		
Yams		
Choko (really a fruit)		
Cauliflower		
Mushrooms		
Potato		
Onion		
Squash		
Swede		
Turnip		
Sweetcorn (really a cereal)		

Whole fruit	✓ or X	Notes
Pear		
Apple		
Banana		
Choko		
Kiwifruit		
Nectarine		
Avocado		
Red capsicum		
Lychees		
Grapes (not whole)		
Sultanas		
Orange		
Apricots		
Peaches		
Mango		
Plums		
Raspberries		
Blackberries		
Blueberries		
Strawberries		
Boysenberries		
Mulberries		

Want more? Go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_vegetables for a full list and description of fruit and vegetables from around the world.

Around 7 months

So now bub is about 7 months old and you are already noticing big changes as your baby gets used to [solid foods](#). They will be making chomping motions with their mouths and even showing when they are ready for another mouthful, or when they've had enough.

Some pointers on bubs around this age:

- Baby will still have **3–5 milk feeds** a day and must be getting iron from either food or iron-fortified baby foods.
- You can look at adding a **third meal** soon if you haven't already, and quantity is still determined by baby.
- You can begin to coarsen the **texture** of baby's meals as their swallowing reflex for coarser foods is developing and they are drinking more water.
- Ensure **water** is offered regularly over the day, don't leave it to bub to tell you they are hungry. This thirst reflex hasn't fully developed yet.
- You can try adding a ¼ teaspoon of **almond, linseed, sunflower or hazelnut meal** (powder) to mashed foods for protein and essential fats (caution with history of allergy). Make your own to ensure baby is eating safe fats.
- Consider adding thoroughly **cooked brown** and **white rice** to their meal.
- Cooked boneless **fish** flakes or mashed **canned fish** (which also provide calcium) such as salmon can be added and are great for immunity, growth and development. Fish such as salmon and mackerel are good choices as they are higher in omega 3 essential fatty acids than most other fish.
- Natural unsweetened full-fat **yoghurt** (which is naturally low in lactose but rich in calcium) can be trialled.
- At around 6-7 months, some agencies suggest introducing **white meat** such as skinless ground **turkey** and **chicken**.
- At this stage, many cultures add **tofu** and other vegetable proteins such as **lentils**; these can be harder to digest due to plant compounds and are generally incomplete sources of protein (often lacking one or more essential amino acids that the body isn't able to make). All legumes must be cooked properly.



Quick tip: Because baby is eating a wide variety of fruit and vegies it may be easier now to cook up larger amounts of each vegetable or fruit and store separately in small containers in the freezer (in 1/3 of a portion so you can take out 2–3 at a time and blend if you choose).

For more information

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For more details refer to your copy of What Do I Feed My Baby available online from the Huggies Bookclub (<http://www.huggies.com.au/benefits/book-club>)



Other titles, childhood nutrition courses, career and personal nutrition courses and resources can be view at www.cadencehealth.com.au or www.sneakys.com.au



About the author

Leanne Cooper, BA (Psych/Ed); Dip. Nut; Grad Cert Higher Ed; Grad Cert Human Nut (pending)., gained her Bachelor of Arts in psychology and education from Auckland University in 1987. After travelling abroad for a number of years she returned to Australia, her childhood home, to continue her studies. Graduating with tertiary qualifications in health and nutrition as well as a post-graduate qualification in education, Leanne has worked in education and health for over 20 years.

While designing health and education systems, Leanne also established her own successful nutrition practice where she originally worked with many high-profile national and international elite athletes. Though currently unable to commit time to a private practice, Leanne still lectures in nutrition, psychology and management and runs her successful education business, Cadence Health. Leanne's nutritional advice features on a number of expert panels such as the Huggies website and OHbaby! NZ. She also consults to a large number of health organisations and childcare centres. Leanne has devoted her working career to community education and health. She believes that 'getting nutrition right' early on in life is the cornerstone to community health.

Leanne enjoys a unique lifestyle on the beautiful northern beaches of Sydney, Australia, with her husband and their two beautiful young sons, Zachariah and Samuel (pictured above).