

Babies usually begin thin purees at 6 months. Between 7-9 months breast milk or formula is the main nutrition for your baby. Once your baby has learned to eat thin pureed solids, it is important to slowly add new textures. To start you want to teach your baby how to eat table foods so they have the skill, but not worry about how much they are eating.

Before introducing new textures, look for signs of readiness:

- Holding head up and sitting up straight while supported in a high chair
- Eating thin purees well (no gagging) for at least 3 weeks
- Opening mouth and leaning body forward when spoon approaches
- Clearing the spoon using lips
- Showing interest in what others are eating

Texture Progression:

It is always best to start with the easiest textures and move to more difficult textures as your baby gains skill and interest. Offer solids 2-3 times per day. Move through textures as follows: thin purees → thick purees → dissolvable solids → mashed or minced solids → soft single texture solids.

Thick Purees are foods that are blended until smooth and stay on the spoon easily. They might be labelled as “Stage 2” baby foods. Thick purees require more movement of the tongue but don’t require chewing. When making your own baby food add less water or use infant cereal to help thicken the puree. Offer thick purees from all the food groups.

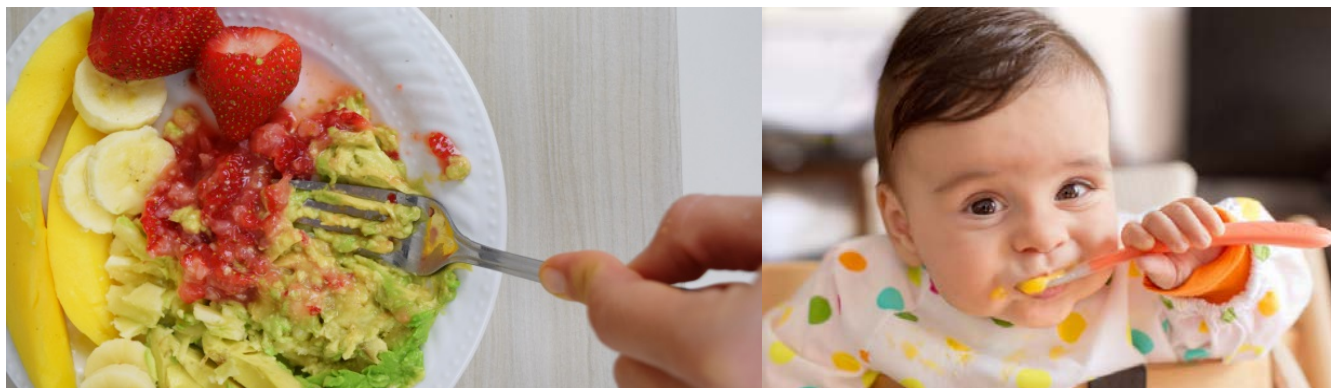


Dissolvable Solids are foods that melt quickly when they mix with saliva (i.e., meltables). These foods help your baby to work on chewing skills but is unlikely to choke on them. Allow your baby to touch and explore these foods on their tray. Demonstrate picking it up and putting it into your mouth. Then, pick up a piece and put it into their mouth, right where their molars will be. If they munch up and down and swallow, you can offer more bites. If you are not sure if a finger food is safe, try it yourself to see how easily it dissolves. Encourage finger feeding when possible but make sure your baby does not overstuff their mouth. Other types of dissolvable solids include:

- Puffs
- Rice rusks
- Baby cookies
- Teething biscuits
- Puffed rice or wheat cereal
- Yogurt melts

Mashed or Minced Solids are foods that are mashed with a fork or minced in a food processor. They offer greater texture than the purees and require more coordinated movement of the tongue and mouth muscles. Make sure the consistency has no unexpected lumps. Examples include:

- Soft-cooked minced ground meats (beef, chicken or pork)
- Well-cooked mashed tofu, lentils or beans
- Well-cooked and mashed sweet potatoes, potatoes, carrots, broccoli, or squash
- Fork-mashed soft fruits like mango, cantaloupe, banana, melons, peaches, avocado



Soft Single Texture Solids are small pieces of soft or well-cooked foods. Make sure your child uses an up and down movement of their jaw when eating these foods. If your baby is gagging a lot, trying to swallow the piece, or mashing it against the roof of their mouth with their tongue, they are not yet ready for this texture. Offering longer strips makes grasping the food easier. Make sure your baby takes a small bite and does not overstuff their mouth. Examples include:

- Pasta noodles without sauce
- Banana bread or muffins
- Pancakes
- Soft grated cheese
- Shredded chicken or fish
- Well-cooked egg yolk
- Strips of bread crust or toast
- Strips of ripe fruits and overcooked veggies
- Strained veggies out of soup



Don't be discouraged if your baby gags and spits out new solids. It may take many attempts before babies accept new foods/textures. If your baby is struggling to move to eating solids, consult a health care professional.

References: wechu.org, yourkidstable.com, caringforkids.cps.ca, butterflytherapy.com