



"open wide"

"here comes the airplane"

Introduce cereal at 6 months.

# A TIME OF CELEBRATION: baby's first taste of solid food

Tasting solid food for the first time is an exciting experience for a baby. A new texture. A new flavor. A challenging new skill to learn and celebrate. But remember nothing can really prepare a baby for his or her first taste of solid food. All children react differently so don't be surprised at whatever kind of face your baby makes in response to this brand new experience. Just be sure to have a camera handy to document this wonderful milestone!

The following questions and answers may help you in making this first experience with food a happy one.

## **What's the first food a baby should eat?**

Offer baby rice cereal first. It is the easiest for a baby to digest and least likely to cause an allergic reaction.

## **How thick should I make my baby's cereal?**

Mix about 2-4 tablespoons of rice cereal with breastmilk or iron-fortified formula until it has the consistency of thin gravy.

## **How often should I feed my baby?**

Offer small amounts of baby cereal with a spoon two or three times a day. Stop when he turns his head away from the spoon or refuses to open his mouth.

## **Should I put the baby cereal in a bottle?**

Baby cereal should always be given with a small spoon—never in a bottle. Giving cereal in a bottle can cause your baby to choke. It also robs your baby of this exciting new adventure.

## **How will I know if my baby is allergic to baby cereal?**

The most obvious signs of allergy are rashes, itching, swelling and/or redness. Call your doctor if you see any of these signs on your baby's skin. Introduce new foods at least three days apart so you can watch for signs of allergy and determine which food causes the allergy if one should develop.

## **What if my baby doesn't like baby cereal?**

Eating cereal is a fun and exciting adventure for babies. They enjoy playing with the new texture on their tongue and, in the process, may make you laugh with funny faces. Continue offering small amounts—about half a teaspoon—on the tip of your baby's tongue and allow time for your baby to gradually explore and get used to this new feeling.

## **How long before my baby can try other cereals?**

Offer baby rice cereal with breastmilk or iron-fortified formula for at least a week. Then offer baby oatmeal or barley cereal for at least three days before starting any other new cereal. Offer mixed grain cereals after single grain baby cereals (rice, oatmeal, barley) have been individually introduced.

## **sample meals**

### **Morning snack**

1-2 tablespoons rice cereal mixed with breastmilk or iron-fortified formula

### **Afternoon snack**

1-2 tablespoons rice cereal mixed with breastmilk or iron-fortified formula

*Six- to eight-month olds still rely mostly on breastmilk or formula to grow and develop. At this age, breastfed babies usually nurse six or more times a day. Formula-fed babies drink about 27 to 32 ounces a day.*