

GROWTH

Signs Baby Is Ready for Solid Foods: 7 Readiness Checklist

Not sure if your baby is ready to start solid foods? Check all 7 developmental readiness signs recommended by the AAP before introducing purees or finger foods.

Key Takeaways

- Most babies are ready for solids around 6 months - and never before 4 months.
- Look for three core readiness signs: steady head control, sitting with support, and active interest in food.
- Loss of the tongue-thrust reflex (no longer automatically pushing food out) signals oral-motor readiness.
- Age alone is not a readiness sign; assess development, and ask your pediatrician if your baby was premature.
- Starting around 6 months also matters nutritionally, as birth iron stores begin to decline.

Frequently Asked Questions

At what age can I start solids?

Most babies are ready for solids around 6 months, and never before 4 months. The exact timing depends on your baby showing developmental readiness signs, so check with your pediatrician.

What are the main signs my baby is ready for solids?

The core signs are good head and neck control, the ability to sit upright with support, loss of the tongue-thrust reflex that pushes food out, and clear interest in what you are eating.

Is age alone enough to start solids?

No. Age is a guide, but your baby should also show physical readiness signs. A baby who turns 6 months but cannot yet hold their head steady may need a little more time.

Why not start solids before 4 months?

Before 4 months a baby's digestive system and oral-motor skills are still developing, and early solids can crowd out the nutrition from breast milk or formula. Most guidance advises waiting.

What is the tongue-thrust reflex?

It is an automatic reflex that pushes objects out of the mouth to protect young infants from choking. As it fades, usually around 4 to 6 months, your baby can move food to the back of the mouth and swallow it.

What food should I offer first?

There is no single required first food. Iron-rich options and single-ingredient purees like iron-fortified cereal, pureed meats, mashed avocado, or banana are common starting points. Ask your pediatrician what fits your baby.

Sources

1. When, What, and How to Introduce Solid Foods — Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
2. Starting Solid Foods — American Academy of Pediatrics
3. Your baby's first solid foods — NHS