



# The Children's Doctor

## All you need to know about... Introduction of Solid Food



### When should I introduce solid foods?

Until 6 months of age, babies only need breast milk or infant formula to grow and develop. At around this age, your baby may show signs of readiness to commence solid foods. These include:

- watching other people eating with interest
- requiring food more often
- putting objects in the mouth
- reaching for your food!

### How should I introduce solid foods?

Introduce solids slowly, trying one new food at a time. Wait two to three days before introducing another new food. Rice cereal is a great starter food and it can be mixed with breast milk, formula or water. Initially, solids should be offered as a supplement after a milk feed. Fruits (such as apple, pear and banana) and vegetables (such as potato and pumpkin) can be introduced early but should be pureed, unseasoned and served warm. Start with one to two teaspoons of solid food once a day and increase to two to three tablespoons three times a day as your baby grows.

### When should I introduce meat?

Once your baby is tolerating pureed fruits and vegetables and is over six months of age, you can introduce foods with a thicker texture such as chicken, meat, yoghurt, porridge and WeetBix.

### When should I change to cow's milk?

Breast milk or infant formula should be the main source of milk until 12 months of age. Switching to cow's milk before 12 months of age can result in iron deficiency anaemia. It is reasonable to use cow's milk in the preparation of solid foods such as mashed potato or cereals but it is important to continue milk feeds with breast milk or infant formula.

Always avoid nuts, whole peas, raw or undercooked vegetables in very young children as these may cause choking.

Always supervise your child during feed time.