

## Starting Solids

Most babies will start solids by six months when they are showing signs of readiness. Solids are given to supplement the milk intake and shouldn't reduce the amount of milk taken.

Breast milk or formula is still the most important source of protein and energy at this stage. From nine months start to give solids first, then breast milk/formula. This allows for the natural transition from breast milk/formula to solids as the main source of nutrition intake by 12 months.

### Signs of Readiness

**Signs that your baby might be ready to start solids include:**

- Good head and neck control and can sit upright with little or no support.
- Being able to munch and swallow and not automatically push solids out of the mouth.
- Shows an interest in food - for example, they look at what's on your plate.
- Reaches out for your food.
- Opens their mouth when you offer them food on a spoon.

**Some behaviours that show lack of interest are:**

- Swatting at the spoon.
- Turning head away from food.
- Tightening lips when the spoon comes near the mouth.
- Spitting out food that enters mouth.
- Crying.

### Enzymes

If your baby is pancreatic insufficient, they will require enzymes (Creon) with any food containing fat, carbohydrate or protein. The only foods that can be digested without enzymes are fruits and most vegetables, all other foods (meat, fish, egg, nut paste, dairy, tofu and avocado) will need enzymes.



It is best to give the enzymes at the start of the meal to ensure the fats are digested and absorbed effectively. Remember, enzymes are only effective for about 30 minutes.

To work out how many scoops of Creon to give your baby, the amount of fat in the food needs to be calculated. One scoop of Creon covers, on average, four grams of fat. There are some excellent apps for fat counting, such as 'Easy Diet Diary' or 'Calorie King' to assist you.

You can also talk to your dietitian about reading labels to measure the fat content in food products or recipes. They will go over examples with you to ensure you are confident in matching the Creon to your baby's food intake.

### Starting Solids

Starting a baby with CF on solids is the same as for any other baby, except for the addition of enzymes (if required).

#### 4-6 months

Start by offering a teaspoon of pureed fruit or vegetable after a breast or bottle feed.

At this age, breastmilk or formula will still be the primary source of nutrition and so should always be offered first. Introduce a variety of foods to your baby. When introducing the nine main allergens, ensure to do so one at a time and earlier in the day so you can monitor for any allergic reactions.

Be aware that your baby's poo will change colour and texture as new foods are introduced. It is normal for babies to gag frequently as they learn how to eat solid foods. Some babies can gag on purpose when they don't want to eat something, which can last into their toddler years. It is recommended to speak to a health care professional if your baby gags, coughs or splutters regularly when being fed. At around six months your baby will be able to sit, chew and swallow semi-solid food, skills needed before your baby can start to eat solid food.

### **From 7 months**

Begin introducing foods from all of the different food groups; grains (cereal), vegetables, fruit, meat and meat alternatives and dairy foods. Iron rich foods such as rice cereal (mixed with breast milk or formula), meat, fish, egg, tofu, lentils and legumes are good foods to introduce early. Iron rich foods are important for brain development and growth.

You can also start to introduce protein rich foods such as yoghurt, custards and nut butters. By this age the texture of the food can be a little lumpier than puree, however it does depend on your baby and how he or she copes with the texture. Mashed vegetables, porridge and eggs are good options for slightly chunkier meals.

### **From 8 months**

This is a great time to introduce finger foods, which your baby can hold themselves and chew. Try finger foods such as toast, rusks, pieces of cooked vegetables (e.g. carrot, broccoli and asparagus), fruits (e.g. banana, watermelon, rockmelon and strawberries), milk arrowroot biscuits and strips of cooked chicken, fish or meat. This may be a messy time, however encouraging self-feeding is an important milestone for your baby to achieve.

Full fat dairy products are great, and protein is also very important for the growth and development of your baby. Nut pastes are ok to give to your baby on toast and bread (if your baby doesn't have nut allergies) but avoid giving your baby whole nuts until they are three years of age.

### **From 9 months**

Your baby can start eating some of the same foods as the rest of the family, as well as continued breastmilk or formula. Experiment more with finger foods and self-feeding. Soft fruits can be given in pieces, with skin and seeds removed and other types of food can be given in pieces or chopped. Changes in the texture of food is very important for your baby's jaw and speech development.

### **From 10-12 months**

By 10 months you can feed your baby three meals a day plus two to three snacks. Your baby can have high energy and protein rich foods and will still require about three to five milk feeds a day. If they require extra calories or high energy food additions, you will be guided by their CF dietitian.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Food Texture</b>
0-4 months	Liquid (and apple/pear puree for babies requiring enzymes)
4-8 months	Pureed, mashed, then minced and chopped foods
8-12 months	Finger foods
12 months onwards	Same foods as the family (but for some children with CF, a higher fat content)

Below are some examples of the types of foods from each food group that fall into the different texture categories. If you would like more information regarding the introduction of solids foods, please contact your CF dietitian, child health nurse or GP. This is not intended for use as a meal plan.

	Grain Foods	Vegetables	Fruit	Meat & Meat Alternatives	Dairy Foods
<b>PUREE</b>	Baby cereal	Pureed sweet potato	Pureed apple	Blended tuna casserole	Plain yoghurt
<b>MINCED &amp; MASHED</b>	Porridge	Mashed avocado	Mashed banana	Scrambled eggs	Fruit & yoghurt
<b>FINGER FOODS</b>	Toast fingers	Cherry tomatoes & cucumber slices	Watermelon slices	Meatballs	Cheese sticks

## Food Preparation

When your baby first starts having solids, it can help to make up small batches of meals. Try and spend some time cooking up the different food items, freezing them into ice cube trays then placing in plastic zip lock bags when frozen. Calculate the enzyme dose required for each meal and write it on the zip lock bag. This allows you to have lots of different meal options on hand and know how much enzymes they will need with each meal. You can also write down the enzymes for each meal on a meal plan. Check out the sample meal plan in the 'Charts' section.

## High Calorie Meal Ideas

Infants with CF may need extra help to gain weight and grow well. This is due to their higher energy needs. Choosing foods naturally high in protein and healthy, unsaturated fats will assist with your child's growth and development. Here are some tips for including a wide variety of foods with high protein and healthy fats:

<b>Breast milk or formula</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add to pureed vegetables, fruits, meats or rice cereals</li> </ul>
<b>Meat, chicken, fish, tofu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add to puree vegetables twice/day</li> <li>• Offer a variety of meats including red meat, chicken, pork, fish, seafood (avoid highly processed foods such as salami, sausages and bacon until your child is 12 months)</li> </ul>
<b>Lentils &amp; legumes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add to vegetables as a meat alternative</li> <li>• Try hummus and tahini as a dip or spread</li> </ul>
<b>Avocado</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mash and add to vegetables or fruits</li> <li>• Spread on dissolvable crackers or sandwiches</li> <li>• Mash to make a dip</li> </ul>
<b>Dairy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full fat yoghurt or cheese make a great snack</li> <li>• Add ricotta cheese, cream cheese or grated cheese to vegetables</li> <li>• Add cheese to sandwiches/crackers</li> </ul>
<b>Eggs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try scrambled eggs as a breakfast meal</li> <li>• Dip toast into boiled eggs</li> <li>• Try French toast for breakfast or lunch</li> <li>• Make a quiche or frittata for lunch or dinner</li> </ul>
<b>Nut butters &amp; seeds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use peanut butter/tahini/almond butter as a spread on toast, sandwiches or crackers</li> <li>• Make a nut-based dip with cottage or cream cheese</li> <li>• Add ground nuts (e.g. LSA powder) to cereal, yoghurt, baked good</li> </ul>

*From Dietitians from the Nutrition Education Materials Online.*

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