



conscious
mommy

A FREE GUIDE

first foods, *the traditional way*

This is how I started solids with five babies - a little Chinese medicine and a lot of old-school food wisdom.

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BEFORE YOU START

Every baby gets there on their own clock. Somewhere around six months, most babies start showing you they're ready - not with a chart, with their body. Watch for these:

- **Sits with a little support** and holds their head steady.
- **Reaches for what's on your plate** and watches you eat like it's the best show in town.
- **Doesn't push food straight back out** with their tongue anymore.
- **Can bring things to their own mouth** - that hand-to-mouth skill is part of eating.

All four, most of the time, is your green light. Some babies show them at five and a half months, some closer to seven. Both are normal.

one at a time, at first

I liked introducing certain foods one at a time at first, so I could see how my baby responded. No waiting three days between every single food - just a little intention, especially with the big allergens (more on those soon).

SAFETY, IN ONE TINY BOX

Always feed your baby sitting upright, and prepare foods in an age-appropriate texture. Gagging can be part of learning to eat; choking is not. Watch your baby while they eat - and consider an infant CPR + choking course before starting solids. One evening, and the whole thing feels less scary.

A LITTLE NOTE

*Before any of this, run it by your pediatrician - especially if allergies run in your family, or your baby has severe eczema or a known food allergy. And trust yourself: you know your baby better than any guide, including this one. **Not medical advice** - just what I've done at my own table, five times over.*

THE FIRST FIVE FOODS

These are the five I reached for first, every time. Soft, real, nutrient-dense food, the way grandmothers fed babies long before baby food was an aisle.

1. Egg yolk, cooked through

The original baby multivitamin - choline, iron, DHA and the fat-soluble vitamins a tiny body actually absorbs. The deeper orange the yolk, the more inside it.

- **How:** cook the egg all the way through - hard-boiled or scrambled both work. Cool, then mash the yolk with a spoonful of warm water or breast milk.
- **Start:** a teaspoon, then build up to a whole yolk.

2. Bone marrow

The softest, richest first fat there is - it spoons out like butter. A rich, soft source of fat, and one of my favorite early foods.

- **How:** roast a split marrow bone at 450°F for about 15 minutes, until cooked through. Cool, scoop the soft center. Serve a little off a spoon or stirred into anything warm.
- **Start:** half a teaspoon. It's rich - small amounts, often.

3. Bone broth

Not a food so much as the thing that makes every other first food better. Gentle on brand-new digestion, and it turns plain cooked vegetables into something nourishing. This is the habit that never leaves your kitchen - mine still runs on it, five kids in.

- **How:** simmer bones low and slow with a splash of apple cider vinegar, strain, chill. Cook the baby's carrots, squash or rice in it instead of water.
- **Start:** a few spoonfuls cooked into food. Store-bought works too - check there's no added salt.

4. Stewed fruit, warm

Pear or apple, peeled and simmered soft with a pinch of cinnamon. Warm and cooked is easier on a little digestion than cold and raw. Practical bonus: stewed pear is the oldest trick there is for keeping little bowels moving.

- **Start:** a few soft spoonfuls. If the belly's happy, it becomes a regular.

5. Liver, a little

The most nutrient-dense food on this list - iron, vitamin A, B12, choline. I used very small amounts, occasionally, alongside other iron-rich foods.

- **How:** cook it through, blend a small piece into warm mashed vegetables or broth. Mild, and it disappears into the food.
- **Start:** a teaspoon here and there. This one is a garnish, not a meal.

THE FOODS I INTRODUCED EARLY ON PURPOSE

Current guidance is clear: deliberately delaying the common allergens doesn't prevent allergies. Once your baby is starting solids, offering them early - in baby-safe forms - is the better bet. These are the ones I brought in on purpose, one at a time:

- **Well-cooked egg** - scrambled or hard-boiled, mashed fine.
- **Smooth peanut butter, thinned** - stirred into yogurt, congee or mashed fruit. Never a thick spoonful on its own.
- **Dairy** - plain whole-milk yogurt. (Whole milk as a drink waits until after one.)
- **Wheat** - soft bread or well-cooked pasta.
- **Sesame** - a little tahini, thinned the same way as the peanut butter.

Small tastes at first, then keep them in the rotation - **regularly is the part that matters** .

CHECK FIRST IF

If your baby has severe eczema or a known food allergy, talk to your pediatrician before this part. They may want to guide the first tastes - that's normal, and worth it.

IRON, AND WHAT A PLATE ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE**iron, beyond liver**

Around this age iron starts to matter more, and liver isn't the only way. Rotate through: very soft shredded beef, dark-meat chicken, lentils and beans, egg, fish - and iron-fortified infant cereal if you use it.

you don't need to make a baby meal

Most nights, the baby eats a softer version of what's already on the table. Some real combinations from my house:

- congee + mashed yolk
- mashed sweet potato + shredded beef
- stewed pear + yogurt
- avocado + egg
- vegetables cooked in broth + shredded chicken

THE EVERYDAY STUFF**let the texture grow up**

smooth and mashed → thicker and lumpier → soft finger foods

Don't camp on completely smooth purées - babies learn to eat by meeting new textures, a little at a time.

water + cups

Once solids start, offer small sips of water with meals in an open cup or a straw cup. Breast milk or formula stays the main drink through the first year.

BABY FOOD DOESN'T HAVE TO TASTE LIKE BABY FOOD

Babies don't need bland. Garlic, cinnamon, herbs, mild spices, a little olive oil - let them meet the flavors your family actually eats. Just keep the salt modest.

YOUR FIRST 2 WEEKS OF SOLIDS

start here

fully cooked egg → marrow → stewed pear → soft vegetables → congee

then begin adding

meat → avocado → yogurt → allergens → different textures

the whole time

milk or formula stays the main meal. food is practice.

That's it. No 100-food checklist, no measuring. Screenshot this page - it's the one to send to your sister.

THE CHINESE MEDICINE VIEW

In Chinese medicine, a baby's digestion is young and tender, and it does its best work with food that is warm, cooked and simple. That's the whole philosophy: cook softly, serve warm, keep meals uncomplicated.

if poop slows down

Reach for the kitchen first: stewed pear or prune, fluids, vegetables, a little extra movement and floor time. It usually sorts itself out. If it stretches past a few days - or you see blood, vomiting, or a hard, swollen belly - call the pediatrician.

the chinese medicine lens

When a baby suddenly sleeps restlessly, has a coated tongue, sour breath, goes off their food or gets cranky at the belly, Chinese medicine calls that **food accumulation** - the little digestion got more than it could move. Simplify for a day or two: smaller amounts, softer textures, congee or broth. Warm, easy, boring food.

congee - the original baby food

Across Asia, a baby's first bowl isn't cereal from a box, it's congee: rice simmered long in plenty of water (I use bone broth) until it falls apart into a soft, creamy porridge. Cook it down, mash in a little yolk or soft vegetables, and you have the gentlest complete meal a baby can eat.

THE ONE-LINE VERSION

Warm over cold. Cooked over raw. Simple over complicated. Small amounts, often. That's a baby fed the traditional way.

WHAT I PERSONALLY SKIPPED

Not rules - just what I chose to leave out, and why.

- **Rice cereal.** It wasn't for us - but iron-fortified infant cereal can genuinely be a useful source of iron. If it works for your family, use it without guilt.
- **Pouches and puffs.** I didn't want pouches to replace learning different tastes and textures, so I used whole foods most often.
- **Juice.** Sugar without the fruit. Offer water, and let fruit be food.
- **Added sugar.** Their palate is a blank page right now - sweet potatoes and stewed pear are sweet enough.
- **Honey before one.** This one isn't a preference, it's a hard rule - infant botulism risk. No honey, in anything, until after the first birthday.

CALL THE PEDIATRICIAN IF

Hives, swelling, vomiting, blood or mucus in the stool after a new food, or any trouble breathing - don't wait it out, call. Same for a fever that isn't linked to a clear cold, or a baby who seems in real pain.

A RHYTHM FOR THE FIRST WEEKS

Keep it loose - milk is still the main meal this whole season. Food is practice, tasting, skill-building. One sitting a day is plenty at first.

- **Days one and two:** a single food, a teaspoon or two.
- **The rest of week one:** rotate the first five, one at a time.
- **Week two:** start mixing foods your baby has already met - yolk mashed into congee, marrow stirred into vegetables.
- **From there:** meat, avocado, yogurt, allergens, new textures.

Offer, don't push. A turned-away face is information, not failure. You bring the food; they decide the rest.

the pantry checklist

pastured eggs · marrow bones (ask the butcher to split them) · bones for broth, or a clean store-bought one with no added salt · pears + apples for stewing, cinnamon · carrots, squash, sweet potato · a small piece of liver · white rice for congee · smooth peanut butter + tahini · plain whole-milk yogurt · lentils

THE HONEST VERSION

*You don't need 100 first foods. You don't need a separate meal for the baby. You don't need to measure how much they ate. You don't need to panic when they barely touch dinner. **You do need iron-rich foods, varied textures, allergen exposure, safe preparation, and a lot of repetition.** Milk is still doing the heavy lifting.*

if this found you in the season of tiny spoons and second-guessing
everything - you're doing better than you think. five babies in, i
promise: fed with love is fed well.

MORE FROM ME

want to understand your own likely pattern? the \$37 instant pattern guide - 10-12 questions,
instant result.

want me to read your whole picture? the \$185 personalized wellness protocol, written for
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This guide is for education and inspiration only and is not medical advice. Every baby is different - always check with your pediatrician before starting solids, especially with a family history of allergies, severe eczema, or a known food allergy. Never give honey to a baby under 12 months, and always watch your baby while they eat.