

How to Introduce Peanut to Your Baby

Research has shown that delaying the introduction of foods to babies doesn't help to prevent food allergies. Health Canada recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, with the introduction of solid foods at 6 months when babies show signs of readiness. After you have introduced iron-rich foods to your baby, introduce peanut and other common allergenic foods (e.g. eggs, dairy products, tree nuts).

Tips for Introducing Peanut to Your Baby

- A baby is usually ready to eat solid food at six months. When she is ready, she will be able to sit up with very little help, hold her head up with good neck control, and won't push a spoon out of her mouth with her tongue. Your baby needs iron at six months. **Test that she is ready for solid foods first by offering these iron-rich foods before peanut:** meat, fish, eggs, tofu, beans, lentils and fortified infant cereal.
- **To offer peanut to your baby safely, use this simple peanut mixture:**
 - Mix two teaspoons (10 mL) of smooth peanut butter or powdered peanut butter with three (15 mL) or more teaspoons of water, breast milk or formula until smooth.
 - Offer a small amount of this peanut butter mixture to your baby.
 - If you do not see any signs of an allergy*, continue feeding the rest of the peanut butter mixture.
- **Feed peanut butter during the day and not before your baby's bedtime.** This will make it easier for you to see a reaction. Usually, signs of an allergic reaction* will appear between a few minutes and a couple hours after eating.
- **Whole peanuts and other nuts can cause your baby to choke.** Do not give them to children under four years old. Chunky peanut butter, peanut butter spread thickly or offered on a spoon can also cause your baby to choke. Spread smooth peanut butter thinly on toast or bread.
- Once you have introduced peanut butter, **continue to offer it a few times a week** so that your baby will continue being exposed to peanut and will keep tolerating it.



*Signs of an allergic reaction can be mild or severe. They can include hives, swelling (lips, eyes, tongue, face), coughing, throat tightness, nausea, vomiting, cramps, dizziness or trouble breathing. If your baby has trouble breathing or any other severe allergy symptoms, call 911. Your baby needs help right away.

Other ways to include peanut in your baby's food

- Add smooth or reconstituted powdered peanut butter to infant cereal, mashed fruit or yogurt until smooth.
- Use peanut butter or peanut flour in baked goods such as muffins and loaves or sauces, curries and stir-fries.
- A peanut-flavoured corn puff snack called Bamba™ and other similar products are available in the international aisle in many grocery stores.

Did you know?

In Canada, there are 10 foods that cause the majority of allergic reactions:

- Peanuts
- Tree nuts (cashews, almonds, Brazil nuts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, walnuts)
- Sesame seeds
- Cow's milk
- Eggs
- Mustard
- Seafood, which includes fish, shellfish (e.g. shrimp, lobster, crayfish) and molluscs (e.g. scallops, clams, mussels)
- Soy (e.g. tofu, edamame)
- Wheat (e.g. bread, pasta, infant cereal)
- Sulphites – a food additive (found in foods such as dried fruit, cereal, condiments, etc.)

If you have more questions about introducing peanut to your baby or common food allergens, contact:

- Your baby's doctor, a registered dietitian or health care provider
- Your community health office
- Dial-a-Dietitian

More Information

- Food Allergy Canada – Early Introduction
<https://foodallergycanada.ca/living-with-allergies/ongoing-allergy-management/parents-and-caregivers/early-introduction/>
- Health Canada – Food Allergies
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-allergies-intolerances/food-allergies.html>

To speak to a registered dietitian for **free**, call:

Dial-a-Dietitian

1-877-830-2892

Call 204-788-8248 in Winnipeg