Parents are starting babies on solid foods too early

Current recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) are that infants should be introduced to complementary foods at around six months of age. A [new study](#) assessed the food intake of 1,482 children age six months to 36 months. Parents were asked how old the child was when introduced to juice, cow's milk, sugar water, baby food or anything else, even water.

The analysis showed that only one third of babies in the U.S. were introduced to these other foods at about six months. 16% were introduced to these before four months, 38% at between four and five months of age, and 13% at seven or more months.

Introducing babies to foods too early can cause them to miss out on important nutrients that come from human milk; too late can also be problematic.

**AAP recommendations on breastfeeding:**

- **Exclusive breastfeeding for approximately six months**
- **Continue breastfeeding until the baby's first birthday or longer while mutually desired by mother and baby**

Formula fed infants are at more risk for early introduction of solids.

Introduction to solids prior to four months is associated with increased weight gain and adiposity, both in infancy and early childhood. Babies do not produce the enzymes for digestion of certain foods until the four to seven month age.

In a previous study, the most common reasons for introducing solid foods early were:

- "My baby was old enough"
- "My baby seemed hungry"
- "I wanted to feed my baby something in addition to breast milk or formula"
- "My baby wanted the food I ate"
- "A doctor or other health care professional said my baby should begin eating solid food"
- "It would help my baby sleep longer at night"

Moms who were most likely to start solid food too early were younger, unmarried,
Healthcare providers can influence the long-term health of the babies in their care by educating parents about the current recommendations on starting solid food, both timing and food type.

For more information, please [click here](#).

---

**Prescribe Donor Milk**

Donor human milk is the first choice for all babies anytime moms' own milk is unavailable. It is essential for any baby with a weakened immune system or special dietary needs. To learn more about prescribing donor human milk from Mothers' Milk Bank to infants in your care, please visit our website to view a short introductory video.

---

**Potential Milk Donors**

Human milk is a gift that last a lifetime and we rely on healthcare providers to encourage patients with excess milk to become milk donors. **If you have a patient with an established milk supply and healthy baby, please have her contact us.** Women interested in becoming donors should visit our website for more information.

---

**About Mothers' Milk Bank**

A nonprofit program of Rocky Mountain Children's Health Foundation, **Mothers' Milk Bank** (MMB) collects, tests, processes and provides donor human milk to babies across the country. Babies who receive the milk may be premature or have severe illnesses and need human milk to thrive.

MMB consistently provides more milk to NICUs than any other nonprofit milk bank in North America and adheres to the strict guidelines of the **Human Milk Banking Association of North America.**

Dedicated to babies. Dedicated to quality. Dedicated to safety.

Mothers' Milk Bank | 303.869.1888 | milkbankcolorado.org