

Food Allergies in Babies

Although allergies are on the rise in Australia, the risk of your baby developing an allergy to a certain food is still very low. If there is a family history of allergies, the risk of your baby developing one increases.

Your diet while breastfeeding

If you are breastfeeding you do not need to avoid particular foods, everything in moderation. Exclusion of allergenic foods from the mother's diet while breastfeeding has not been shown to prevent allergies.

Breastfeed for how long?

Exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months is recommended by the World Health Organisation for many reasons. Breastfeeding during the period that solids are first introduced may help prevent the development of allergies.

Once solids foods have been introduced at around 6 months, breastfeeding is encouraged to continue for as long as mother and infant wish. Breastmilk provides significant benefits to your child especially in the first two years of life.

Formula Feeding

If your baby is receiving formula or you are planning to wean your baby from the breast, and there is a family history of allergies, please consult with your health professional as to



whether your baby requires a specialised formula. If you suspect your baby has an allergy do not change formulas without consulting a health professional.

Introducing solids

There is little evidence that delaying the introduction of solid foods beyond 6 months reduces the risk of allergies. When introducing foods, choose a time in the day when you can observe your baby to see if a reaction occurs (preferably the morning). New foods should be offered one at a time every few days, to rule out the (remote) possibility of food allergy or sensitivity.



The most common foods that babies may have a reaction to are:

- Cow's milk and milk products (full cream cow's milk should not be given to your baby as a drink until after 12 months of age)
- Egg (especially egg white)
- Foods with peanut or tree nut products in.
- Seeds e.g. sesame seeds
- Seafood/fish
- Soy products
- Wheat such as bread, some breakfast cereals and pasta

Symptoms of Food Sensitivity

- Watery bowel actions (poos)
- Vomiting
- Rashes (on the chest or bottom)
- Swelling around the lips and mouth or in the throat
- Wheezing when breathing

Most children grow out of food allergies before they start school.

If you suspect that your baby might have a food allergy, contact your Child Health Nurse or GP to discuss it.

It is best not to restrict your baby's food choices until they have been tested for a food allergy by a specialised health professional.



Websites for more information:

- www.allergy.org.au
- www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Food_Allergies

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If you need further assistance contact the Ngala Helpline
 Telephone 9368 9368
 Country Access 1800 111 546
 8am to 8pm 7 days a week
 or see our website www.Ngala.com.au