

ONE PATH, ONE PAGE A DAY

The 30-Day Starting Solids Plan

What to serve, how to cut it, how much,
and what to do when it isn't working.



**Tomorrow's first-foods meal is already planned.
So are the next 29.**

For babies around 6 months · Based on public guidance from the CDC and the AAP
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Why starting solids feels so confusing

If starting solids feels confusing, you are not doing anything wrong. In a 2026 survey of 1,002 U.S. parents and caregivers by Akron Children's, **7 in 10** said there is more conflicting advice than ever, and **6 in 10** said it makes them doubt their own instincts.

The pediatrician says one thing. Instagram says another. Grandma remembers a third. Every source is a piece of the puzzle, and no one hands you the whole picture: what to serve tomorrow, how to cut it, how much, and what to do when your baby coughs.

The problem is not too little information. It is **too much**, all pulling in different directions.

This plan gives you **one path**. It follows the public guidance from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and turns it into one page a day:

- **What to serve today**, with a spoon way and a finger-food way.
- **How to cut it**, with drawings in real size at the back of this kit.
- **How much to start with**, and how to read when your baby is done.
- **What to do if it isn't working**, at the bottom of every day.

You don't need to read anything else for the next 30 days. Just open today's page.

Survey: Akron Children's, Caregiver Confidence Report, April 2026.

How this plan works

One page a day. Each day has one goal, today's menu and three steps. Most days take 10 to 20 minutes, including cleanup.

Spoon way or finger way, your choice. Every menu shows both. You can use one, the other, or mix them in the same meal. Both are fine; pick what feels right for your family.

One new food, then 3 days. The CDC and the AAP advise offering one new single-ingredient food at a time and waiting 3 to 5 days before the next new one, so you can spot a reaction. This plan uses the 3-day rhythm: a new food on Days 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25 and 28. In between, your baby practices foods already tried.

Breast milk or formula stays the main food. Keep milk feeds as usual. Solid food in these first weeks is mostly for practice: tastes, textures and skills.

Go at your baby's speed. If a day feels like too much, repeat it tomorrow. The 30 days are a path, not a race.

The 3 rules for every meal

1. Baby sits upright, in a high chair, with you right there the whole time.
2. Your baby decides how much. You decide what and when.
3. Keep it calm. No screens, no rushing, no pressure to take "one more bite."

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Is your baby ready?

Most babies are ready around 6 months. The CDC lists these signs:

- ☐ Sits up alone or with a little support
- ☐ Holds head and neck steady
- ☐ Opens mouth when food comes near
- ☐ Swallows food instead of pushing it all back out
- ☐ Brings toys and hands to mouth
- ☐ Tries to grab small objects

Not before 4 months. The CDC says starting solid foods before 4 months is not recommended. Age alone isn't the sign; your baby's skills are.

Talk to your pediatrician before Day 1 if your baby was born early, has a health condition, has trouble swallowing, has severe eczema, or has had a reaction to any food. Bring this kit to the appointment if you like.

This kit is general information about feeding healthy babies, based on public guidance from the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics and other public health sources listed below. It is not medical advice and does not replace your pediatrician. Every baby is different: if your baby was born early, has a health condition, has severe eczema, has had an allergic reaction, or has trouble swallowing, talk to your pediatrician before starting.



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Gagging or choking?

Read this before Day 1. Knowing the difference keeps you calm when it matters.

Gagging: normal, noisy

- Loud: coughing, sputtering, retching sounds
- Face may turn red
- Tongue pushes forward, eyes may water
- Baby is still breathing and making noise

What to do

Stay calm and stay close. Let your baby work it out. Don't reach into the mouth; that can push food further back. Gagging is a normal reflex while babies learn to eat.

Choking: emergency, quiet

- Quiet: can't cough, cry or make sound
- High-pitched squeak, or no sound at all
- Skin, lips or gums turn pale or blue
- Panicked or surprised look

What to do

This is an emergency. Call 911 and start infant first aid right away (back blows and chest thrusts). Take an infant CPR and choking class before Day 1: the American Red Cross and the American Heart Association run them, many for free or a small fee.

Sources: NHS Start for Life (2026); Utah State University Extension (2025).

Infant first aid is best learned hands-on, in a class with an instructor.

Day 1

WEEK 1 — FIRST TASTES

**Your baby's very first taste:
soft, ripe avocado.**



NEW FOOD: Avocado

Avocado is soft, mild and easy to mash, so it is a calm way to begin. Today is not about how much your baby eats. It is about sitting in the chair, seeing a new color and trying a new feeling in the mouth.

Today's menu

Spoon way

Ripe avocado mashed smooth with a fork, thinned with a little breast milk or formula.

Finger way

A finger-size spear of very ripe avocado (see the cut guide). Leave a strip of skin on one end as a handle if it is too slippery to hold.

Do these 3 steps

- 1 Pick a calm time**, about an hour after a milk feed, when your baby is awake and happy. Not when very hungry or tired.
- 2 Start with half a spoonful or less**, or put one spear on the tray. Let your baby touch, squish and taste. Smile and name it: "avocado."
- 3 Stop when your baby says "done"**: turning away, closing the mouth, pushing the spoon or fussing. 1 or 2 tastes is a great first day.

Tip: Write it down. Start your New food log at the back of this kit today: date, food, how it went. You will use it every new-food day.

If it's not working

Baby makes a face or pushes it out? Normal. A new texture feels strange, and pushing food out with the tongue is a reflex that fades with practice. Try again tomorrow; most babies need many tries before they accept a food. **Baby cries?** End the meal kindly and try again tomorrow at a different time of day.

☐ Day 1 done

Date: _____ How it went: _____

Day 2

WEEK 1 — FIRST TASTES

Same food, more confidence: learn your baby's hunger and fullness signs.



Repeating the same food takes away the surprise, so your baby can focus on the skill: opening the mouth, moving food back, swallowing. Today you also learn to read your baby, which is the most useful skill of the whole month.

Today's menu

Spoon way

Mashed avocado, a little thicker than yesterday.

Finger way

One or two avocado spears on the tray.

Do these 3 steps

- 1 Watch for "more":** leaning forward, opening the mouth, reaching for the spoon or food, getting excited.
- 2 Watch for "done":** turning the head away, closing the mouth, pushing food away, slowing down, getting distracted.
- 3 Follow the signs.** Offer while your baby shows "more"; stop at the first clear "done." Never coax one more bite.

Tip: Let your baby hold a second spoon. Busy hands mean fewer grabs at yours, and it is good practice for self-feeding.

If it's not working

Baby only plays with it? That is learning. Squishing and smearing teach your baby about food. **Ate a lot yesterday, almost nothing today?** Totally normal. Appetite changes day to day; milk is still doing the heavy lifting.



Day 2 done

Date: _____

How it went: _____

Day 3

WEEK 1 — FIRST TASTES

Add a few sips of water from an open cup.



Once solids start, a small amount of water with meals is fine. The CDC suggests about 4 to 8 ounces a day for babies 6 to 12 months; at the start, a few sips is plenty. Learning to drink from an open cup is a skill that takes weeks, so starting early helps.

Today's menu

Spoon way Mashed avocado.

Finger way Avocado spears.

Drink 1 to 2 ounces of water in a small open cup.

Do these 3 steps

- 1 Pour just a little water**, about a finger's depth, so spills are small.
- 2 Hold the cup to your baby's lips** and tip it slowly until the water just touches the lips. Let your baby sip; don't pour.
- 3 Offer sips a few times** during the meal. Most of it will spill. That is the practice.

Tip: Babies copy you. Take a sip from your own cup first, slowly, and say "sip."

If it's not working

Baby coughs on the water? Use even less water and tip the cup more slowly. **Baby won't open?** Try a straw cup instead, or just let your baby hold the empty cup today and play with it.



Day 3 done

Date: _____

How it went: _____

Around 6 to 8 months: big and long

Print at 100% ("actual size"). Hold the food over the drawing to check.

Babies first grab with the whole hand, so food must stick out of the fist: long, about as wide as an adult finger, and soft.

LOOKS LIKE ACTUAL SIZE (PRINT AT 100%)

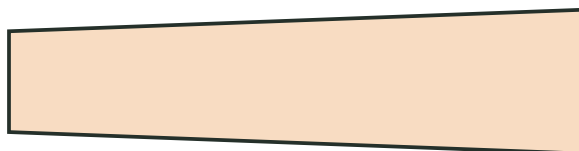
Avocado spear

About the length and width of an adult finger.



Sweet potato wedge

Skin off. Squishes between thumb and finger.



Omelet or toast strip

Egg fully cooked; toast lightly toasted, no seeds.



Beef log

Ground beef shaped and cooked through, to 160°F.



Broccoli floret

Large floret, with the long stem as a handle.



Half a banana

Leave the bottom of the peel on as a handle.



Ruler check: this line should measure 3 inches when printed.

Squish test: every piece should mash easily between your thumb and finger (toast: lightly toasted).

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New food log

Fill in a line on every new-food day. Take it to your pediatrician visits.

Reaction: write "none," or what you saw (rash, hives, vomiting) and when. Any reaction: call your pediatrician.

SOURCES

Where this plan comes from

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Public sources used

- CDC, "When, What, and How to Introduce Solid Foods" (updated April 14, 2026). [cdc.gov/infant-toddler-nutrition](https://www.cdc.gov/infant-toddler-nutrition)
- CDC, "Choking Hazards" (updated March 11, 2026). [cdc.gov/infant-toddler-nutrition](https://www.cdc.gov/infant-toddler-nutrition)
- CDC, "Foods and Drinks to Avoid or Limit" (updated April 14, 2026). [cdc.gov/infant-toddler-nutrition](https://www.cdc.gov/infant-toddler-nutrition)
- CDC, "Foods and Drinks to Encourage" (updated April 1, 2026). [cdc.gov/infant-toddler-nutrition](https://www.cdc.gov/infant-toddler-nutrition)
- American Academy of Pediatrics, HealthyChildren.org, "Starting Solid Foods" (updated June 23, 2026).
- American Academy of Pediatrics, HealthyChildren.org, "When can I start giving my baby peanut butter?"
- California WIC Program, "Finger Foods" handout (revised February 2024).
- NHS Start for Life, "Choking and gagging on food" (updated January 26, 2026) and "Around 6 months" (updated June 12, 2026).
- Utah State University Extension, "Keeping Kids Safe at Meals: Preventing and Responding to Choking" (January 16, 2025).
- U.S. FDA and EPA, "Advice about Eating Fish."
- Akron Children's, Caregiver Confidence Report (April 2026).

This kit follows these sources; it is not made, reviewed or endorsed by any of them. Guidance changes over time; when in doubt, your pediatrician's advice comes first.

Thank you for choosing a plan instead of a guess. — startingsolidsplan.com