



KEEP IT SIMPLE SOLIDS

Helping families build strong connections, routines, and sleep foundations to help you feel more confident in meeting your child's emotional, physical, nutritional, and sleep needs with empathy, love, and respect. My mission is to help parents Thrive, not survive.



LULLABY SOS



About Me

And This Program

I'm Elaine Harvey, founder of Lullababy SOS, and I'm an ADHD mum to a lively ADHD daughter. Since 2001, I've guided over 20,000 families through the precious, often overwhelming, early years of parenting. As a Postpartum Maternity Nurse, Early Childhood Educator, Certified Paediatric Sleep Specialist, and the Australasian Regional Director of the International Association of Professional Sleep Consultants, my mission is to support parents like you through this wonderful yet sometimes unpredictable journey of early parenting. If you would like to read more about my personal journey [CLICK HERE](#)



INTRODUCING SOLIDS

So, you've finally hit your groove with this whole parenting thing. Sleep and feeding feel (mostly) predictable—at least for now! Then, just as you're catching your breath, here comes the next big milestone: introducing solids.

I have to say, this is one of my favourite developmental stages in that first whirlwind year. Watching your baby discover new tastes and textures can be such a joy, filled with messy grins and tiny taste tests. But let's be honest—this stage can also feel like a maze of conflicting opinions. Everyone from your doctor, child health nurse, friends, random strangers and social media creators seem to have a take on what, when, and how you should feed your baby. It can leave you feeling confused, overwhelmed, and even a bit guilty about your choices.

My goal with this guide is to strip away the confusion and keep it simple. I want you to feel informed and supported, not overwhelmed or stressed. You don't need to follow every suggestion to the letter—take what feels right for your family and leave the rest. Above all, remember that this is about nurturing your baby's interest in food, exploring new flavours, and embracing the fun (and the messiness!) of this next step.

Let's dive in, keep it easy, and enjoy the ride together

Keep It Simple and Going Real

Now that we've cleared the air about conflicting advice and settled on a relaxed, fun approach, let's get practical. There are two key concepts that will guide you through this journey: **The K.I.S.S. Method** (Keep It Simple Solids) and embracing a **Whole, Real Food approach**. By combining these principles, you'll have a solid roadmap for starting your baby's food adventure in a way that's both stress-free and nutritionally sound. Let's break each concept down before diving into the details.

K.I.S.S. METHOD (KEEP IT SIMPLE SOLIDS)

K — Know Your Baby's Readiness:

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Look for those developmental signs—steady head control, curiosity about your meals, and diminished tongue-thrust reflex—so you know you're starting at the right time.

I — Introduce Foods Gradually:

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Begin with small, simple tastes. Start with a single food and wait a few days before adding another. This makes it easier to spot any reactions and helps your little one adjust gently.

S — Start With Basics:

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Stick to soft, easily digestible options like pureed veggies, fruits, and iron-fortified cereals. Keep textures smooth at first, and then progress to more variety as your baby grows confident.

S — Stay Flexible and Have Fun:

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There's no need to follow a strict plan. Go with your baby's cues, trust your instincts, and let them play (yes, it's messy!). The key is to relax and enjoy this new stage together.

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Embrace Whole, Real Foods for a Balanced Diet

When starting solids, think about what nature provides rather than relying on packaged, processed options. Embracing a more “paleo-style” approach means offering a range of whole, real foods that provide a balance of healthy fats, proteins, and carbohydrates. This helps ensure your baby’s growing body and brain get the nutrients they need—naturally.

What’s on the Plate?

Proteins:

Well-cooked meats (e.g. chicken, beef, lamb), fish, eggs, and lentils or tofu if you’re including plant-based proteins.

Carbohydrates:

Think colourful fruits and veggies first—sweet potato, pumpkin, carrots, zucchini, and apple or pear are all great starting points. These naturally sweet, vibrant foods are packed with nutrients and fiber, giving your baby gentle energy and a chance to explore a variety of flavors. Over time, you can introduce other whole-food options like oats or quinoa to broaden their palate even further.

Fats:

Avocado, coconut oil, olive oil, full-fat dairy (if tolerated), and nut butters (smooth and safe for baby) all provide those all-important healthy fats that help with brain development and long-lasting energy.

By keeping your baby’s diet focused on real, nutrient-dense foods, you’re laying the foundations for a lifetime of healthy eating habits.

When is the right time to start solids?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends introducing solid foods to babies around 6 months old, but not before 4 months.

Babies should be developmentally ready to start solids.

This means they can

- Hold their head up,
- Sit with support- not being able to sit unsupported, as many parents are told.
- Have lost the tongue-thrust reflex that pushes solid foods out of their mouths.

How do I know my baby is ready for solids?

Every baby is different; some babies may show signs that they are ready for solids as early as 4 months (Starting solids early than 4 months is not recommended), and some may not show any interest until around 7 months. Here are some signs that your baby may be ready for solids:

- Your baby has relatively good head and neck control.
- Your baby watches you eat, opens their mouth if you bring food close to them, and may try to get your attention by making noises or reaching out for your food when you are eating.
- Milk feeds alone are no longer satisfying.

One of the simplest ways to know if your baby is ready for solids is to simply put a spoon to their mouth. Your baby will either open their mouth keen to 'eat', or they will purse their lips or stick out their tongue (extrusion reflex).

Not Ready For Food

The Extrusion Reflex

Baby is NOT ready for solids if: Baby's tongue tends to push the food or spoon out. This is called the extrusion reflex, which disappears when your baby is ready for solids. This reflex is a baby's way of telling you that their digestive system is not ready for solids yet.

Turning Head Away

Closing their mouth and turning their head away, disinterested in exploring food



Ready For Solids

Mouth Open and Eager



Your baby is ready for solids when they actively open their mouth as the spoon approaches and close it around the spoon. At first, they may not swallow much because they're still figuring out how to move their tongue differently than they do with milk. This learning process takes time. Early on, they'll likely try to swallow food as if it were milk, but with a bit of practice, they'll get the hang of moving food to the back of their mouth and swallowing it more efficiently. The key sign here is genuine interest—if they're keen and curious, you're on the right track.

Common Reasons Parents Start Solids Early

- A doctor or paediatrician recommends doing so because of reflux. The theory is that the heavier food will help them keep their milk down.
- Friends or family recommend starting early.
- Baby doesn't feed well on breast or bottle.
- Mum isn't sure that she has enough milk supply to satisfy the baby's hunger.
- Baby is waking and feeding often during the night.
- Parent just wants to get started earlier.

For the reasons mentioned above, I don't recommend starting solids until your baby indicates that they are ready. Introducing solids early to fix an existing problem seldom works and can often make life even more stressful for both you and your baby.

Spoon-fed or Baby-led,

What's the best approach?

While no one is better than the other, when starting solids, it can help to begin with smooth purees and spoon-feeding, giving your baby a gentle introduction to new tastes and textures while ensuring they're actually swallowing some nutrients. Once they're comfortable, gradually add in baby-led elements by offering soft, grab-friendly foods to encourage exploration, fine motor skills, and a sense of autonomy. Think of it this way: the food in the bowl (spoon-fed) provides steady nutrition, while the food in their hand (baby-led) brings fun, discovery, and valuable learning experiences.



01 First Foods

These days, it is still heavily recommended that iron-fortified rice cereal be the first food that you should introduce to your little one. This is commonly recommended because, beyond 6 months, breast milk alone no longer contains enough iron to sustain your child's needs.

The first introduction to solids needs to be sloppy, smooth in texture (i.e., no lumps), and mild in taste. Most babies' first foods are iron-enriched rice cereal. Mix it with a little human milk, formula, or cool, boiled water to achieve a runny consistency.

- **If your baby is formula-fed, most formulas are iron-fortified, so there is no need to introduce baby rice cereal as a first food.**
- **A surprising number of babies don't like the taste of rice cereals and are keen to move on to vegetables and fruits quite quickly. There is no reason why you can't add a little fruit or vegetables to the rice cereal to entice them.**

Introducing Solids

Start Small and Watch Closely:

- ✓ Begin with about 2—4 teaspoons of solids once a day for a few days up to a week. Keep an eye on your baby's tummy—if they become constipated or seem uncomfortable, pause for a week or two, or offer a smaller amount until their digestion settles.

Add Meals Gradually:

- ✓ •If they're handling that first meal well, stick with the same portion size and introduce a second meal after about a week. If all goes smoothly, add a third meal after another week or so. It's usually best to increase the number of meals first rather than loading up one meal with more volume.

Frequency Before Quantity:

- ✓ •Offering solids more often (in small portions) help your baby practice new eating skills and explore different flavours. Once they're happily eating multiple meals, you can slowly start to increase the portion sizes at their own pace.

One New Food at a Time:

- ✓ •Introduce a single new food, then wait at least two days before trying another. This way, if your baby has a reaction, it's easier to pinpoint the culprit. Feel free to mix new foods with "safe" ones they've already tried, but still wait 2—4 days before adding something completely new.

Explore Combinations:

- ✓ After establishing a few well-tolerated foods, have fun creating new flavour combos. This variety keeps it interesting for your baby and encourages them to enjoy a wide range of tastes and textures.

Have Fun

The 4 Day Wait Rule

If your family has a history of allergies—or you just want to be extra cautious—consider following the "4 Day Wait Rule" when introducing new foods. This simply means offering a single new food and then waiting about four days before introducing another. By doing so, you'll have a clearer picture of how your baby's body responds, making it easier to pinpoint any troublesome ingredient if a reaction occurs.

Watch For



- Diarrhea or frequent, loose stools
- Vomiting
- Rashes on the skin or bottom
- Runny nose
- Hives (raised, itchy welts on the skin)
- Irritability or excessive gassiness
- Breathing difficulties or wheezing
- Swelling of the face, lips, or tongue
- Tightness in the throat

Allergy vs. Intolerance:



Allergies involve the immune system and often show up with skin or breathing symptoms, while intolerances usually cause digestive discomfort like gas or bloating. Most intolerances fade as your baby's gut matures—often disappearing after the first year. If you're ever uncertain, reach out to your healthcare professional for guidance and reassurance.

Introducing Allergens

Introducing common allergenic foods might feel intimidating, but it's an important part of expanding your baby's palate and potentially reducing their risk of allergies in the long run. Current research suggests that introducing these foods a bit earlier—around 4–6 months, when they show signs of readiness—may actually help lower the chances of an allergic response later on. Aim to offer most (if not all) of the high-allergy foods by around 7 months, as early exposure may support better tolerance. Introduce allergens slowly and thoughtfully and if you have concerns or a strong family history of allergies, consult your doctor or a healthcare professional for guidance.

Peanuts



- Start with a small amount of smooth peanut butter mixed into other foods like pureed fruits or vegetables.
- Gradually increase the amount if your baby shows no reaction.
- Avoid whole nuts or chunky peanut butter to prevent choking.

Eggs:



- Start with well-cooked eggs (scrambled or hard-boiled).
- Introduce the yolk first, then the white if there's no reaction.
- Offer small pieces and gradually increase the portion size.

Dairy:



- Start with small amounts of yogurt or cheese.
- Avoid giving cow's milk as a drink until after 12 months.
- Gradually introduce more dairy products if there's no reaction.

Fish:



- Start with small amounts of well-cooked, flaked fish.
- Introduce one type of fish at a time.
- Avoid shellfish initially, as they are more likely to cause allergic reactions.

Wheat:



- Start with small amounts of wheat-based cereals or bread.
- Gradually introduce more wheat products if there's no reaction.

Introducing Allergens

Soy

- ✓ • Start with small amounts of soy-based products like tofu or soy yogurt.
- Gradually increase the portion size if there's no reaction

Tree Nuts

- ✓ • Start with small amounts of finely ground nuts mixed into other foods.
- Avoid whole nuts to prevent choking.

Shellfish

- ✓ • Introduce well-cooked shellfish like shrimp or crab in small amounts.
- Avoid raw shellfish due to the risk of foodborne illness.

Sesame

- ✓ • Start with small amounts of tahini (sesame paste) mixed into other foods.
- Gradually increase the amount if there's no reaction.

Guidelines for Introducing Allergens

- ✓ • **Take It One Step at a Time:** Offer just one new allergenic food at a time. Wait at least 3–5 days before trying another, making it easier to spot which food might be causing a reaction.
- **Start Small:** Begin with tiny amounts—say, a quarter teaspoon of smooth peanut butter mixed into a familiar puree. If there's no reaction, gradually increase the serving size over the following days.
- **Stay Alert:** Keep a close eye on your baby for any signs of an allergic response—hives, swelling, vomiting, diarrhoea, or breathing difficulties. If you notice anything concerning, stop immediately and reach out to your paediatrician.
- **Choose the Right Moment:** Introduce allergenic foods during daytime hours when medical care is more readily available, and continue offering them regularly to help maintain tolerance.
- **Know What to Hold Off On:** Steer clear of honey (due to botulism risk) and whole nuts (a choking hazard) until your baby is older and better able to handle these foods safely.

Preparing Your First Foods:

One Big Cook for Ongoing Convenience

Starting solids doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, it's as easy—or as complex—as you make it. One of the simplest strategies is to spend just a couple of hours upfront preparing a variety of single-ingredient purees. Freeze these into handy cubes that are stored in the freezer in individually labelled bags, and you'll have a “library” of flavours ready to mix and match with pantry staples, fridge items, and even bits of your own family meals. Over time, as you add new tastes and leftover veggies or proteins (mashed, chopped, or flaked) into the rotation, you'll keep building your selection without needing another big puree session. By the time your baby has worked through a portion of your stockpile, you can ease into chunkier textures and more adventurous combinations—making mealtime both simple and enjoyable, month after month.



Getting Started

Choose a range of nutrient-dense vegetables and fruits to introduce a variety of flavours. For example:

- 5—6 carrots
- 4—6 potatoes
- 4 sweet potatoes
- 1 broccoli head
- 1 cauliflower head
- 5 courgettes (zucchini)
- ½—1 small pumpkin
- 4—5 apples
- 4—5 pears



Peel, chop, and roast, boil or steam each ingredient separately. Using a multilayer steamer can speed this up.

Then, mash your potatoes (they don't puree well due to their starch) and puree the rest, adding a bit of the reserved vegetable water if needed to achieve a smooth consistency.

Storing Your First Foods:

- Spoon each puree into ice cube trays, cover, and label them.
- Once frozen, pop the cubes into labelled zip-top bags.
- Keep the extra cooked veggies in the fridge while you freeze in batches.
- Repeat the process until everything is frozen in handy, measured portions.



How to Use Your Purees

As your baby tries these different tastes and textures, they'll gradually develop their palate. Once they're comfortable with these initial flavours, you can start mashing or chopping other foods and add them to your trusty puree cubes. Need a meal in a pinch? Just grab a few cubes of different veggies or fruits and combine them for a balanced, ready-in-minutes meal.

By investing a little time upfront, you'll have a hassle-free system in place—so you can focus less on kitchen prep and more on enjoying mealtimes with your baby

Practical Tips

- **Batch Cooking:** Steam, puree, and freeze veggies and fruits in small portions. Label your freezer bags so you always know what you're grabbing.
- **Portion Control:** Begin with one meal per day, then move to two, and finally three meals as your baby grows accustomed to eating solids.
- **Watch for Comfort:** Keep an eye on your baby's digestion. Adjust portions or timing if they seem uncomfortable.
- **Variety Early On:** Offering a range of fruits, veggies, healthy fats, oats, and eggs early sets the stage for broader acceptance later.

First Tastes To Try- And Beyond



- **Veggies:** Carrot, potato, sweet potato, broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, pumpkin
- **Fruits:** Apple, pear, avocado
- **Healthy Fats:** A little coconut oil, butter, or olive oil mixed in
- **Grains & Proteins:** Oats, eggs



Next Step: Broaden their Menu - As your baby gets used to these basics, start mixing things up. Combine veggies, add in new fruits, and introduce proteins like slow-cooked meats, fish, chicken, tofu, and eventually other veggies like mushrooms, bell peppers, and even berries. As their palate expands, they'll become more comfortable and adventurous, setting the foundation for a lifelong appreciation of diverse, nutritious foods.



Homemade vs. Store-Bought: Homemade baby food is cost-effective and means you can offer your baby fresh ingredients and introduce flavours that reflect what your family actually eats. It allows you to tailor textures and flavours to your baby's preferences and gradually adapt as they grow without relying on fillers or excessive processing. Preparing larger batches and freezing them lets you tap into a ready supply of nutrient-rich, great-tasting meals that align with your baby's evolving palate.

If making everything yourself isn't always an option, that's perfectly fine. High-quality frozen baby food delivery services now offer nutritious, convenient options that retain more of their natural goodness than many shelf-stable jars and pouches. While shelf-stable products are convenient, the extended processing they undergo to ensure a long shelf life can impact both taste and nutritional value.

Ultimately, it's about finding the right balance and combination for your family. Whether you lean on homemade creations, frozen subscriptions, or occasional off-the-shelf options, each approach can fit into a healthy, varied diet that supports your baby's enjoyment and exploration of food.



What's All the Hype About Bone Broth, Gelatine, and Gut-Boosting Biotics?

You might see a lot of buzz around "superfoods" like bone broth, gelatine, and probiotic-rich ingredients that promise to support your baby's gut health and development. While these can be beneficial, they're not essential magic bullets. In reality, a simple, balanced approach—offering a range of whole, real foods—naturally provides the nutrients, proteins, and healthy fats that support gut health, brain development, and overall growth. The KISS method and whole real food approach ensure your baby's diet is already packed with the good stuff, so there's no need to complicate things with special tonics or trendy add-ins.

A varied mix of vegetables, fruits, proteins, and healthy fats will give your little one all the building blocks they need.

First Tastes To Try- And Beyond



What About Water? - Once your baby starts solids, it's a good idea to introduce a small amount of water—just a few sips with meals is often enough. This helps them get used to the taste and sensation, and it can support digestion, especially as their diet expands. There's no need to go overboard; breast milk or formula still provide their main hydration. As they grow and gradually reduce milk feeds, you can increase their water intake accordingly. Keep it simple, offer it in an open cup if you can, and let them get the hang of drinking it naturally as part of their everyday routine.



What If Baby Rejects Food? - Don't worry if your baby turns their nose up at a new taste—they're still learning. Many babies need repeated exposure (sometimes 10–15 tries) before truly accepting a new flavour. Let them play: squish it, smell it, push it around. Babies learn through their senses, and this “food play” helps them get comfortable with different textures and tastes over time.



Its Ok To Get Messy: Try not to stress about the inevitable mess. Resist the urge to wipe them down every second. Allowing your baby to explore food freely—getting it on their hands, face, and even hair—fosters a positive relationship with eating. Embrace the splatters and smears as part of their discovery process.

Meal Plan Ideas

To Get You Started

These meal ideas are just examples. Every baby is different, so feel free to adjust the order, the pace, and the ingredients based on your baby's readiness, preferences, and any advice from your healthcare professional. Remember to introduce one new food at a time, waiting a few days between introductions to watch for any reactions.

Month 1

Goal: Start with 1 meal a day.

- Follow a 2–3 day wait rule between new foods. Introduce the second meal by Week 2, and the third meal by Week 4.

Week 1 (1 meal/day):

- Day 1–3: A few teaspoons of iron-fortified rice cereal mixed with breastmilk/formula
- Day 4–7: Introduce pureed carrot (start small and increase slightly each day if well-tolerated)

Week 2 (Add a 2nd meal by mid-week):

- Meal 1 (Morning): Iron-fortified rice cereal + breastmilk/formula
- After 2–3 days of carrot, add a new puree at your second meal: sweet potato (wait 2–3 days before introducing another new food)

By the end of the week, your schedule might look like:

- Breakfast (Meal 1): Rice cereal
- Lunch (Meal 2): Carrot or sweet potato puree

Week 3 (2 meals/day):

- Introduce a new fruit (e.g., pear) after a 2–3 day wait from your last new food. Offer pear at the lunch meal and rotate with carrot and sweet potato on different days.
- Breakfast (Meal 1): Rice cereal (daily staple)
- Lunch (Meal 2): Rotate carrot, sweet potato, and introduce pear after the appropriate wait period

Week 4 (Add 3rd meal by end of week):

- Consider adding another vegetable like zucchini (introduced after a 2–3 day wait from the last new food).

By the end of Week 4, you might have:

- Breakfast (Meal 1): Rice cereal with a fruit
- Lunch (Meal 2): Rotate carrot, sweet potato, pear
- Dinner (Meal 3): Add zucchini, avocado or another new veggie once introduced

By the end of Month 1: Your baby could be on three small meals a day, having tried several basic fruits and veggies, plus iron-fortified rice cereal. Adjust portion sizes and textures based on your baby's cues.)



Meal Plan Ideas

To Get You Started



Month 2

Goal: Keep 3 meals a day. Add more variety in texture flavours and flavour combinations while still observing the 2—3 day wait rule for new foods. Begin incorporating more veggies, fruits, and possibly a protein/allergy food source if comfortable.

- Continue offering rice or oat cereal at breakfast, but now consider mixing in a small spoonful of pureed apple or pear.
- Introduce other veggies (e.g., broccoli, cauliflower) one at a time with a 2—3 day wait between each.
- Add a simple protein, like well-cooked, pureed chicken or lentils, after your baby has accepted a few veggies and fruits.

As The Month Goes On:

- Start combining previously introduced foods (e.g., carrot + apple, sweet potato + zucchini)
- Adjust textures (more lumpy) as your baby is more comfortable
- Introduce some finger food to play and explore with you can do this before offering their purees or mashed food

Month 3

Goal: Your baby should be comfortable with three meals a day. Gradually increase the variety and incorporate more fruits, veggies, proteins, and allergenic foods.

- Maintain the 2-3 day wait when introducing anything completely new but keep trying new foods
- Begin adding thicker textures and, if your baby shows readiness, soft finger foods.
- Continue offering iron-rich foods, mixing them with different fruits or veggies they've already tried.

Month 4

Goal

By this stage, your baby may be ready to tackle lumpier textures and a wider range of flavours—essentially, baby-friendly versions of your family meals. You can start offering coarsely mashed or chopped foods instead of smooth purees and introduce more complex combinations and seasonings (just keep salt and strong spices to a minimum). Think soft pieces of well-cooked veggies, tender shreds of chicken, or flakes of fish mixed into familiar staples like mashed potatoes or oatmeal.

Continue to have fun with food and help your little one learn to enjoy the same wholesome foods your family loves.

Closing Thought: Remember, starting solids is a journey of exploration and learning for both you and your baby. It's not about following rigid rules or reaching milestones at lightning speed, but rather discovering what works best for your unique family. Enjoy the experience and make it a positive one by offering a wide variety of foods, encouraging exploration, and staying patient. Keep it simple, stay flexible, and trust your instincts. Celebrate the small wins—those first messy bites, funny faces, and new flavours—and know that every taste, texture, and mealtime shared is helping your little one develop healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime. Enjoy the ride!

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