

Weaning

Description

- The introduction of solid food feedings and the gradual replacement of milk by solid food as the main source of energy and nutrients.
- Shared pleasure in eating and feeding enhances the relationship between infants and their caregivers.
- Signs of readiness for solid foods:
 - Adequate head control.
 - Interest in feedings.
 - Decrease in tongue thrust.
 - Ability to sit with support at 60-90 degrees.

Considerations

- Very low-birthweight infants are at risk for developing aversions to feeding.
 - May have more gagging when initiating solid feeding.
- Water and juices should not be offered prior to 6 months of age.
- Whole milk should be offered at ≥ 12 months of age.
- Weight gain may be jeopardized by adding poor caloric solid foods in place of breast milk or formula.
- Premature infants may feed more slowly due to weaker global tone, limited energy, and a lack of fully coordinated suck and swallow reflexes and oromotor tone.

Recommendations

- AAP recommends solid foods be introduced at 4-6 months corrected age.
- Use preterm formula milk to liquefy dried cereal foods until 9 months corrected age.
- Introduce rice cereal first, then vegetables or fruits.
- Introduce single-ingredient baby foods one at a time, and continue for 5-7 days before introducing an additional new food.