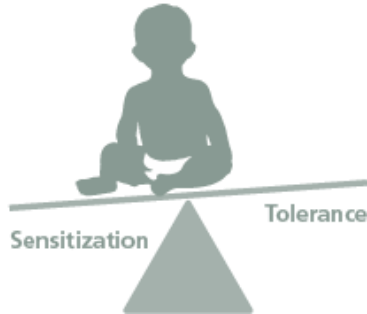


WIC Food Allergen Introduction in Infants Tip Sheet

What is the Dual Allergen Exposure Hypothesis?

Theory that regular exposure to food allergens through the skin can lead to allergy, while consumption of these foods at an early age may result in tolerance of these foods.



What does an allergic reaction look like?

Mild

A new rash or a few hives around the mouth or face

More Severe

Lip swelling; Vomiting; Hives over the body; Face or tongue swelling; Difficulty breathing; Repetitive cough; Change in skin color; Sudden tiredness or turning limp
If this happens, **call 911**.

If an infant has severe **eczema, egg allergy**, or both, families should **discuss with their pediatrician** how and when to introduce peanuts.

Ideally peanut-containing foods should be introduced as early as age **4-6 months** as developmentally appropriate to help reduce the risk of developing a peanut allergy. Keep in mind that family history of food allergy, mild to moderate eczema, and milk or soy proctocolitis **do not require any screening** before adding peanut to an infant's diet.



When should complementary foods be introduced?

USDA/HHS Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends:

At about **6 months**, introduce infants to nutrient-dense complementary foods. Foods like **peanuts, egg, cow milk products, tree nuts, wheat, crustacean shellfish, fish, and soy** should be introduced when other complementary foods are introduced.

When is my baby ready for solids?

Can sit up; Able to control head and neck; Brings objects to the mouth; Swallows food instead of pushing it out
Some infants may show signs of readiness

before age 6 months, but complementary food introduction before age 4 months or waiting until after 6 months is not recommended.



How do I introduce possibly allergenic foods?

Start with a small tip of a spoon amount.

Wait for about 10 to 15 minutes and then slowly feed the rest.

Set two hours aside to watch your child.

Avoid whole nuts and loose seeds as these are choking hazards.

Thin nut butters and tahini with fruit or vegetable purees, infant cereals, breast milk or formula to avoid choking.

How Much?

NIAID Peanut

Introduction Guidelines recommend: two teaspoons of smoothed out peanut butter (about 2 grams of peanut protein) three times a week. At this time there are no guideline for other foods but consider a goal of 2 grams of the food protein *twice a week* (e.g. 1/3 of an egg or 2 tsp of smoothed out nut butters/tahini).



Mass General Hospital
for Children

FOOD ALLERGY CENTER

Food Allergy Prevention Program

For more information visit FAMP-IT.org and DietaryGuidelines.gov