

# Time of introducing solid foods to babies



## “” NCT position statement

The NCT supports the World Health Organization and UK governments' recommendations that babies are exclusively breastfed or fed with formula until around six months of age. Solid foods can then be introduced with breastmilk or formula continuing to provide the majority of the baby's nutrient needs during the first year.

Signs that the baby is ready for solid foods to be introduced into their diet include the ability to sit up, grasp small objects and bring them to the mouth, together with signs of hunger after a milk feed. However, each baby should be treated as an individual. Some babies who are born prematurely or have additional needs may need to start solid foods earlier than six months.

Earlier introduction of solid foods is common but may increase the risk of a less nutritious diet, allergic reactions and childhood obesity. Milk is ideally suited to young babies' needs and provides a better balance of nutrients for an immature digestive system than carbohydrates, sugars or vegetables. Studies show that babies' physical development by six months is more suited to eating solid foods than at four months. They can sit up more independently, pick up foods with their fingers, chew and swallow with less food pushed out and less risk of choking.

**For further press information, please contact NCT Press Office on 020 8752 2404 or email: [press@nct.org.uk](mailto:press@nct.org.uk)**

The NCT (formerly the National Childbirth Trust) is the UK's leading charity on pregnancy, birth and early parenthood. Every year the charity supports thousands of parents through an incredible life-changing experience, offering relevant information and mutual support through our network of over 300 local branches, UK wide helplines, antenatal and early days courses, breastfeeding counselling and peer support schemes.

Operating for over 50 years, the NCT is recognised as the voice of pregnant women and new parents throughout the UK. The charity works continuously for improvements to maternity care and better services and facilities for new parents. We are viewed by many as independent experts in matters relating to pregnancy, birth and early parenthood and are an influential and trusted advisor to UK governments, royal colleges, private sector bodies and other charities.

**For more information visit [www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk) or call the NCT Enquiries line at 0300 33 00 770.**

**NCT**  
Alexandra House, Oldham Terrace,  
London W3 6NH

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