

Introducing Solids for Infants with Cystic Fibrosis

When to introduce solids

Solids can be introduced from 4 months of age when your child is showing signs of readiness (including showing interest in food and having good head control). Start by offering a teaspoon of pureed fruit or vegetable after a breast feed or bottle. Over the next month, you can build up to giving several teaspoons of pureed foods three times a day (after bottle/breastfeeds).

If your child requires pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT) to help them digest their food, you must start dosing these enzymes when your child starts to eat fat containing foods (eg, meat, egg, avocado, nut pastes and dairy). It is best to give the enzymes at the start of the meal to ensure the fats are digested and absorbed effectively.

How to increase the variety of solids

Once your child is managing tastes of fruit and vegetables, it is important to start introducing a variety of foods from the 5 food groups. Iron rich foods such as rice cereal (mixed with breast milk or formula), meat, fish, egg, tofu, lentils and legumes are good foods to introduce early. Iron rich foods are important for brain development and growth. You can also start to introduce protein rich foods such as yoghurt, custards and nut butters. Infants should not have cows milk, honey or raw eggs until they are 12 months old.

Once your child is taking solids well, food can be offered before breast feeds and bottle feeds. The textures can also progress from puree to mashed/minced/chunky at the age of 6 – 8 months.

Administering PERT with solids

- 1 scoop of Creon covers 3 – 5g of fat
- PERT should be given on an acidic food like apple or pear puree/gel
- Remember Creon will only last 30 minutes from the time of administration, if your child takes longer than 30 minutes to complete a meal, redose at 30 minute mark.

- The only foods that can be digested without PERT are fruits and vegetables, all other foods (meat, fish, egg, nut paste, dairy, tofu and avocado) will need PERT.
- To accurately measure how much fat is in the foods you are providing, download the CalorieKing app (or use the website <https://www.calorieking.com/au/en/>). You can also talk to your dietitian about reading labels to measure the fat content in food products or recipes.

What about salt?

Sodium is especially important for infants during rapid periods of growth. Your child's salt requirements increase during hot weather or during periods of illness.

Signs that your baby may need more salt include:

- Concentrated or stong smelling urine
- Salt crystals on the skin/hair line
- Lethargy
- Irritability

Aim to increase salt to ½ teaspoon daily by 6 months of age. Increase to a full teaspoon by 12 months of age.

Salt should be added to all solids and bottles (including water). You can also add salty foods like vegemite, butter, cheese and canned fish to increase the salt content of your child's diet.

How do we ensure good growth?

Infants with cystic fibrosis may need extra help to gain weight and grow well. This is due to their higher energy needs. Choosing foods naturally high in protein and healthy, unsaturated fats will assist with your child's growth and development. Here are some tips for including a wide variety of foods with high protein and healthy fats.

Food / Fluid	Ideas for including in meals
Breast milk or formula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to pureed vegetables, fruits, meats or rice cereals
Meat, chicken, fish, tofu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to puree vegetables twice/day • Offer a variety of meats including red meat, chicken, pork, fish, seafood (avoid highly processed foods such as salami, sausages and bacon until your child is 12 months)
Lentils and legumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to vegetables as a meat alternative • Try hommus and tahini as a dip or spread
Avocado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mash and add to vegetables or fruits

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread on dissolvable crackers or sandwiches • Mash to make a dip
Dairy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full fat yoghurt or cheese make a great snack • Add ricotta cheese, cream cheese or grated cheese to vegetables • Add cheese to sandwiches/crackers
Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try scrambled eggs as a breakfast meal • Dip toast into boiled eggs • Try French toast for breakfast or lunch • Make a quiche or frittata for lunch or dinner
Nut butters and seeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use peanut butter/tahini/almond butter as a spread on toast, sandwiches or crackers • Make a nut based dip with cottage or cream cheese • Add ground nuts (eg LSA powder) to cereal, yoghurt, baked goods