

WHY CEREAL ISN'T CRUNCHY

First foods for babies are so controversial these days. If you were a child born in the 80's, your mom probably fed you cereal before anything else. Her mom (in the 50's) probably fed her off her dinner plate or cereal. Her mother (in the 30's or before) probably fed her sacred foods or cereal.

Cereal, it's what you do when you don't know better.

What are sacred foods?

They are foods known to be exceptional for nutritional quality, brain development and gut health passed down from generation to generation. Most moms do what their moms did. And all mama's do the best they can with their situation.

What was your baby's first food? How old was your wee one?

Go ahead, ask your mom, what was your first food as a babe? How old were you?

Go ahead, if Grandma is still present on this Earth, ask her, what was your mother's first food when she was a baby and how old was she?

The past 100 years or so, moms have been led to believe that cereal for baby is good stuff. Lots of moms today yearn for the facts, seek the truth and research for themselves.

Here is what I have found to be true.

No matter how many times I hear it, my stomach still does flips when a client tells me their pediatrician encouraged them to add cereal to their baby's bottle to get them to sleep through the night. I literally get sick to my stomach wondering if doctors simply perpetuate what they were told in med school or residency or if they actually stop to THINK things through, logistically speaking. Doctors are smart people! Going to school for 8-12 years is hard work! Yet, how many doctors think through the process of nature as compared to what Pharmacopia has trained them to believe in their schooling?

Here's two of the most common pieces of "advice" my clients say their doctors have shared with them as it relates to baby's first foods:

1. Only feed on a schedule. You don't want to spoil your baby.
2. At two weeks to four months, your baby isn't sleeping through the night? All you need to do is start adding baby cereal to his/her bottle and they will.

Did your pediatrician say one or both of these things to you? Or maybe it was your mother-in-law? Just because they did it and "their kids turned out just fine" doesn't mean it's the best thing for your child's health and development.

Let's take a closer look at each of these thoughts:

Dr. Comment 1: *"Only feed on a schedule. You don't want to spoil your baby."*

A baby's stomach is the size of a pea when it is born. Baby's first food, colostrum, is measured in drops. The stomach needs to slowly stretch out over time to be able to accept a larger portion of mama's milk, which is measured in ounces. Because mama's milk, in most cases, is so high in nutrients, it readily absorbs very quickly across the intestinal mucosa, leaving baby soon hungry for more. Your baby should want to nurse around the clock every 30 minutes to two hours. This is normal.

Dr. Comment 2: *"At two weeks to four months, your baby isn't sleeping through the night? All you need to do is start adding baby cereal to his/her bottle and they will."*

First, you should NOT expect your baby to sleep through the night for 6-8 hours. They will wake up to eat due to the quick absorption from the last meal. As for adding cereal to the babe's bottle for extended sleep, this is true. If you do this, it will work, but do you know why it works?

Babies do NOT have the enzymes needed to properly digest grains until between 7 and 10 months of age. Therefore, this cereal sits in the stomach and then sits in the intestines and sits and sits, while remaining undigested. They feel full with food still in their digestive tract and so they sleep longer.

This can create a lot of damage to the brush border of the intestinal tract, increasing the potential for allergies and chronic digestive disorders in early life. Lots of babies receiving cereal experience colic, are constipated, develop eczema, have numerous allergies and more. It allows molecules that are too big to pass through this delicate membrane and their bodies treat these molecules like invaders.

Cereals, even the organic cereals, are nutrient DEAD foods, just like soda pop or a bag of chips. They do not help baby grow healthily or naturally or normally. They can also be loaded with heavy metals, corn syrup, monosodium glutamate, synthetic minerals and additives that are not meant to be in baby's body, ever. This conglomeration of ingredients creates a build up of toxins that cause harm to baby's sensitive membranes and microbiome in the gut tract. This is just the beginning folks.

In addition to that, baby and mom are meant to synch brain waves. Mom is supposed to wake when baby does. This enhances the bonding now and will last a lifetime. When baby sleeps through the night, and mom works out of the home for 8-hour days or more, there is an interference with the bonding. If baby wakes at night then mom and baby can share that intimate bonding, needed for a healthy relationship.

The repercussions of cereal as a first food can be vast.

When it comes to first foods for babe, consider my personal research and parenting, including interviews with other Naturopathic Doctors and experienced Natural Minded Mother's.

First and foremost, you are the mother. You get to decide what is best for your kiddos and how to raise them. Your intuition is STRONG! Listen to it. Read the information and implement what feels right to you.

The Magic Age

Consider NOT starting solids earlier than 7 months.

YES, 7 months not 6 months, not 3 months, not 2 months, not 4 weeks, like the many doctors say...

What makes 7 months magical?

At this age, the tongue-thrust reflex should be disappearing. At this age your baby should have good head control, a good fist grasp and a developing pincer grasp. Your baby should be able to sit up unassisted and maybe even crawling. These milestones are very important as your baby will be feeding himself; he should not be propped up or reclined back because he will be eating nutrient dense, whole foods.

Also, consider starting slow with 1-2 tablespoons at a time. Don't be surprised if it takes several tries for baby to be able to eat solids, as the average baby needs to be exposed to a single food seven times before accepting its taste.

Try feeding and then nurse (or bottle feed to assure baby is satisfied).

Lastly, introduce one food at a time, to be certain that baby is able to digest and assimilate with no negative side effects or allergic reaction. Allow 5-7 days between new foods.

Note: Medical Doctors say four days, that's great but one week is better. One week gives the necessary time that some babies need to see a full range of digestion, absorption, and then utilization of the minerals or chemicals in or on the food. If we present 10 new items at once and there is a reaction, we make the work much harder for ourselves, in locating the allergen at hand.

Here are my EIGHT recommended foods to start with, in no particular order:

1. Organic Avocado – You won't be able to find another fruit that is more packed full of essential nutrients than the avocado. Avocado taste is pleasant and it's easily digested. You can make a "baby guacamole" by mashing and adding some sea salt, cumin or garlic salt. We generally don't put seasonings into an allergen category, but they can be. If adding, just be sure you write down the seasonings to reference later if need be. You may also simply cut the avocado into large dices and mash it. Avocados are high in fat, potassium, phosphorous and magnesium.

2. Sweet Potatoes – Baked or steamed sweet potato is a wonderful beginner food. You can cut it into thick sticks and bake like fries or steam it and then mash it a bit so that it is easy for them to chew and swallow. It is high in beta carotene, vitamin A and fat.

3. Raw Egg Yolks – Scrambled egg yolks are a great food as they are soft, tasty and easily manageable. Even better is raw egg yolks. Make an over easy egg and puncture the yolk with a spoon, dip and insert into baby's mouth. Consider farm fresh eggs only, not pasteurized. Runny egg yolks are an excellent source of numerous vitamins and minerals including, lecithin, choline, protein, cholesterol and fat to help with brain development! *Avoid the whites or albumin as this is a common allergen.*

4. Beef, Veal, Venison, Elk, Bison (red meat) – Babies grow at such a rapid rate, it is important for them to be eating foods that contain proteins and fats that can be broken down and utilized by their bodies for proper growth and development. We also want to look at sources of iron after seven months and this is a great source. Simply cook ground beef or steak to medium rare and pre-chew or place in a food processor before giving to babe.

5. Liver – By age seven months, moms can no longer supply baby with an adequate amount of iron and meat based amino acids like carnitine or ornithine. It is now time for baby to consume these on his or her own. Grass-fed beef, chicken or lamb liver is extremely nutrient dense and should be considered one of the top ten first baby foods, always. Again, simply sauté leaving red in the middle and place in a food processor.

6. Salmon Roe – These nutrient- dense eggs are rich in vitamins A, D, and K2 (Activator X) along with zinc, iodine, and the brain building fatty acid DHA, making them a powerful super food for babies and adults alike. Simply spoon-feed.

7. Anchovies & Sardines – These super foods are rich in calcium and other minerals, and vitamins A, D and B12. They also have lower levels of mercury and other contaminants compared to larger fish, such as shark and tuna, because they are so low on the aquatic food chain, munching mostly on plankton. Break or mash into small, bite sized pieces.

8. Bone Marrow – Lab tests show that 100 grams, approximately six and a half tablespoons, of bone marrow contains 677 IU vitamin A, 29 mcg vitamin K2, and high levels of nourishing fats (up to 45 percent saturated). Bone marrow is rich in spingolipids, which are specialized fats that protect cell membranes against environmental insults and that are critical components of the brain and nervous system. Cook your bones and then scrape out the marrow and spoon-feed.

Homemade Whole Grain Cereals (15 months at earliest or never) – brown rice, quinoa, amaranth, kamut or millet cereal can be used as baby's first food (but not recommended). However, your baby must be at least 10 months old before he has the necessary digestive juices to handle the complex carbohydrates in these cereals. These grains should be pre-soaked, by covering with water and adding 1-2 tablespoons of whey, lemon juice or apple cider vinegar, before cooking and feeding to baby.

Why these foods? Well, let's think about the baby and the breast. The brain of an infant is growing so rapid that it needs an extreme amount of fat in order to be supported. The breast does its best to create milk that is loaded with fat, cholesterol and brain supporting nutrition. The key is fat! Your baby's brain depends on it. All of the above foods have high amounts of fat and various other nutrition making the transition from breast to food as close to equivalent as possible. When we feed grains or cereal, these are low or no fat and essentially nutrient DEAD – which ultimately starves baby's brain and body.

While this could be a blog post in itself, here's my **top 10 foods for baby to avoid**: Wheat, Corn, Tofu and Soy, Nuts, Cow Milk (pasteurized), Honey (pasteurized), Shellfish, Dried Fruits, Strawberries and Egg Whites.

- Wheat, Corn and Soy are greater than 90% Genetically Modified in this country. When it comes to GMO's, I suggest avoiding them at all cost. We are not a Lab Experiment. These are never been proven safe.
- Nuts are not easily digested by most people, let alone babies. They should always be soaked and dehydrated in order to break down enzyme inhibitors, phytates (phytic acid), polyphenols (tannins), and goitrogens.
- The process of pasteurization kills all the good stuff in honey and milk.
- Shellfish feed off the bottom of the ocean, AKA; they eat dead stuff and poop. They are pretty toxic animals.
- Dried fruit with SULFUR is to be avoided at all cost. Homemade dried fruit is totally ok.
- Strawberries are loaded with pesticides and fertilizers. Too many chemicals to be considered a first food for baby.
- And the white of the egg, the albumin is one of the top three nationwide allergens today.

Many pediatric authorities, specifically in Canada, the European Union and the United Kingdom recommend meat as one of baby's first solid foods but not as THE first food. In the United States, the recommendation to start meats earlier than 8 months is also becoming more common. In the USA we have a lot of things backwards, infant food recommendations being one of them.

We want our baby's to eat meat... Nutrient dense, grass fed animals. In the USA, this is hard to come by. We raise animals in CAFO's, load them with hormones and antibiotics and feed them genetically modified foods. Our Meat Is Toxic. Keep in mind that each mainstream recommendation is given to protect Big Money, not the common person. Consider getting your meat for your family from a local farm, not Walmart.

Kids can be picky eaters. I challenge you to give your babies the best.

~May Harmony and Balance be Yours,

Heather

PS. Check out ["Nourishing Traditions"](#) by Sally Fallon for some amazing recipes.

Interested in checking out resources to verify these nutrient dense foods, consider reading the following:

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