



9-Month Handout

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The transition from baby food to table usually takes place over the next one hundred days. By or shortly after the first birthday, you should expect most or all of the baby's eating to be small pieces of soft table food. The precautions with the transition to table food relate mostly to choking prevention. It would be wise to be knowledgeable about CPR and airway rescue as you begin this transition. My short list of foods to avoid or alter before serving includes grapes, raisins, nuts, blueberries, whole beans like pintos or limas, and larger quantities of peanut butter. Except for nuts and raisins, chopping or mashing slightly will likely render these foods to a form that has little choking probability.

The proteins (meat and poultry) need to be cooked at a low temperature for long periods with moisture to create proteins where the flesh has been rendered, and soft and falling off the bone. Before serving, remove skin, sinew and bones and parse, mince or chop into small pieces. Fish is ideal as a choice because it's easily chewed without all the extra cooking time invested. In an effort to create acceptance of a wide variety of table foods, include lots of varied choices (i.e. salmon, pork, turkey, lamb) and keep serving them to solidify acceptance. The same advice about variety applies to the fruits and vegetables also. If you did a good job introducing variety when you began with pureed foods, then all you'll be doing is expanding texture. Even if you've not introduced a lot of variety, grab this opportunity to teach your baby about the vast bounty available in America's marketplace. Whole grains like brown rice and quinoa are excellent choices, but both are small particles and good skills with textured foods should be in place before you introduce this type of food.

The time-honored advice to avoid a myriad of food choices because of potential food allergens is passé and never was based on any scientific data. After six months, that list that used to include peanut or tree nut butter, eggs, dairy, fish, shellfish and soy doesn't need to be restricted until after the first to third birthday as you may have heard. Pay attention to the choking hazards we've discussed previously and start the process of



introduction. Honey remains on the withheld list until after the first birthday (botulism) and breast milk or formula should be the routine choice over milk to age one as well.

If your child's infancy or family history has been marked with food intolerances or allergic disorders, you might be wise to have discussed this with the doctor before beginning the process. So children with food protein induced enterocolitis, atopic dermatitis, asthma or food allergy would deserve a special conversation before beginning.

At the same time you are beginning to transition to table foods, you should also begin the transition to a cup in lieu of a bottle. This transition to a cup is clearly a more important than transition to milk. Start working on the "bed-time" bottle now if you're using one. Most babies have teeth now or will soon and the bedtime milk/formula is full of sugar and therefore represents a dental hazard that is unnecessary. It's also an unsustainable practice to use a bottle past the first birthday and restrict the highly caloric milk/formula to the extent I'll be recommending at the first birthday. If you just can't eliminate the bottle, at the very least limit it to water only as you approach the birthday and most of the issues surrounding the bottle will be settled.