

## Introduction to Table Foods

Between 9 months and 15 months of age, most children have the skills and curiosity to start eating table foods. However, most children at this age don't have the incisors and molars to chew properly and need soft bite-sized pieces to taste and swallow without being a choking hazard. ALWAYS avoid small round objects such as hard candy, nuts, whole grapes, large globs of peanut butter or honey, or chunks of hot dogs, because children even as old as 5 years have died from choking incidents involving such foods. Spoon and other utensil skills usually aren't mastered until beyond 18 months old.

Offer a variety of colors, tastes, and textures (up to 10 per meal, if available). If your child is picky at first, offer some of the following to start, and if all or most are refused, back up the offering with some stage II or III baby foods to help with the transition.

### Examples:

• Muffins (any kind without nuts)	• Graham crackers
• Breads	• Arrowroot or biter biscuits
• Waffles	• Toast/French toast/Zwieback
• Soft bagels (without raisins)	• Pancakes
• Soft fruit-Bananas, watermelon	• Cheese (cottage, small cubes of Cheddar)
• Yogurt	• Pasta (plain is best)
• Contents of soup cans (drained noodles, precooked vegetables)	• Steamed or cooked vegetables ( <b>NEVER</b> raw)
• Rice (soft)	• Meat, chicken, veal, fish (ground or shredded pieces; avoid shellfish and raw fish!)
• Potatoes (mashed)	• Torn up pieces of sandwich (jelly, plain tuna, low sodium lunch meats)
• Egg yolks	

### AVOID the following Choking Hazards:

Popcorn kernels	All nuts (especially peanuts)
Whole grapes (fine, if cut up)	Taffy/caramel/gum
Raw vegetables (carrot or celery sticks)	Hot dogs or meat sticks (OK if cut in many small pieces)
All hard candy	Hard fruits (chunks of apples or pears)
Chips	

### Notes:

- Some children have difficulty with corn or raisins before 15 months old. Most kids can conquer the harder fruits and chips by 2 years of age.
- To avoid allergic problems, it is recommended to avoid egg whites, shell fish and peanut butter until after 1 year of age.
- It is advisable to avoid honey and table syrup until after 15 months of age due to the risk of infant botulism.
- Some children have difficulty with citrus (lemons, oranges) in the first 12 months because the acidity upsets their stomach.