

Should babies eat peanuts? An allergist busts common myths

AUG 25, 2026



Featured topic and speaker

Introducing foods that may cause allergies can feel overwhelming for many parents, but it doesn't have to be.

Board-certified allergist Zachary Rubin, MD, explains how and when to safely introduce common allergy foods, including peanuts, eggs, dairy, wheat, soy, sesame, tree nuts, fish and shellfish. Learn:

- When to introduce common allergy foods
- How to safely offer peanuts, eggs and other allergens
- Signs and symptoms of allergic reactions
- When to talk with a pediatrician or allergist
- Common misconceptions about food allergies in babies

If you have questions about introducing allergens or your child's health, talk with their physician.

Find out what else you need to know about [food allergies](#).

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Speaker

- **Zachary Rubin, MD**, allergist and author, *All About Allergies*

Transcript

Dr. Rubin: Introducing your baby to foods that may cause allergies is scary, but it doesn't need to be. Relax. Here's how to do it safely. Hi. My name is Dr. Rubin. I'm a board-certified allergist practicing in the western suburbs of Chicago, and I've been a member of the AMA for over 10 years.

When your baby is ready for solids, usually around six months, it's actually recommended to start introducing common allergy foods like peanuts, eggs, dairy, wheat, soy, sesame, tree nuts, fish and shellfish. And when we do introduce these foods, we have to do it in an age-appropriate manner. We don't want to give them any whole nuts or thick spoonfuls of peanut butter because it could be choking hazards.

So it's best to introduce one food at a time so that you don't get confused as to which food might be causing a reaction. But just start off with small amounts, a little spoonful, and then wait about 15 to 20 minutes. Give them a little bit more, wait a little bit longer and then give them as much as they want.

Yum, yum, yum, yum, yum.

You can mix it into a food your baby already tolerates—for example, thin, smooth peanut butter mixed into oatmeal or yogurt. Never use whole nuts or thick globs of nut butter, which can be choking hazards.

For allergens such as egg, fish or shellfish, use thoroughly cooked, finely prepared versions appropriate for the baby's developmental stage. Cow's milk shouldn't be used as the baby's main drink before 12 months. Once your baby tolerates an allergen, keep offering it regularly as part of their normal diet. And for the most part, reactions that happen at this age are usually mild.

What should you watch out for? Hives, swelling of the lips or face, repeated vomiting, coughing, wheezing or trouble breathing. Those can be signs of a serious allergic reaction.

If there is a history of a previous reaction or they have moderate to severe eczema, then it's best to talk with their pediatrician in order to understand if they need any kind of testing before introduction.

Your goal isn't to avoid these foods. It's to help your little foodie become a fearless eater. If you have questions about food allergies, talk to your doctor.

Disclaimer: This video is for educational purposes only and is not medical advice. If you have questions about your health and diet, please consult your doctor.