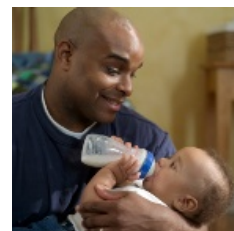




## Cereal in a Bottle: Solid Food Shortcuts to Avoid

While the habit of adding cereal to an infant's bottle is one that has been around for a long time, there are several compelling reasons why you really shouldn't do it unless advised by your pediatrician.



### Ready or Not:

A baby's digestive system is not thought to be well prepared to process cereal until about 6 months of age. When he is old enough to digest cereal, he should also be ready to eat it from a spoon.

*Note: The AAP recommends breastfeeding as the sole source of nutrition for your baby for about 6 months. When you add solid foods to your baby's diet, continue breastfeeding until at least 12 months. You can continue to breastfeed after 12 months if you and your baby desire. Check with your child's doctor about vitamin D and iron supplements during the first year.*

### Too Hard to Handle:

Offering cereal in a bottle (or even on a spoon) before babies are developmentally ready can increase the likelihood of gagging and/or inhaling the thickened mixture into their lungs. Unless there's a medical reason for giving it early, it's not worth jumping the gun.

### Allergy Activation:

Exposure to solid foods (</English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Switching-To-Solid-Foods.aspx>) before the age of 4 months may put babies at risk for developing food allergies (</English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Food-Allergies-in-Children.aspx>) in the future—a risk that can be minimized by simply waiting until 4 to 6 months when the time is right.

### Overfeeding:

Perhaps the biggest reason not to take the addition of cereal in a bottle too lightly relates to overfeeding. By instinct, your baby knows how much breast milk (</english/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/default.aspx>) or formula (</English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Amount-and-Schedule-of-Formula-Feedings.aspx>) to drink based on volume, not calories. While it is said to be difficult to overfeed a baby, this applies when you're talking about breast milk or formula alone. As soon as cereal gets added in, things get a little murky—so murky, in fact, that putting cereal in the bottle is considered by some to be a form of force-feeding that can cause babies to “overdose” on calories.

### Additional Information:

- [Switching to Solid Foods \(/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Switching-To-Solid-Foods.aspx\)](/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Switching-To-Solid-Foods.aspx)
- [Working Together: Breastfeeding and Solid Foods \(/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Working-Together-Breastfeeding-and-Solid-Foods.aspx\)](/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Working-Together-Breastfeeding-and-Solid-Foods.aspx)

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**dated** 5/14/2015

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