

How To Handle Common Issues When Baby-Led Weaning

Most parents are excited to start solids and share their love of food with their babies. Sometimes when babies do not behave as expected at mealtime, it can feel stressful for parents. We wanted to share some common behaviors from babies when starting solid foods and tips to help support them through this stage!

Always check with a pediatrician if there is concern about your child's nutrition and growth.

1. Baby is not interested in food

- If your baby is younger than six months, check to see if they are ready to start solids. If your baby is not ready, they may feel overwhelmed or uninterested in food.
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- Eating with your baby can help increase their interest in food, especially if you make exaggerated faces throughout mealtime. Starting solids is a new experience, and some babies may need extra time to get used to the process. Try to focus on making sure that your baby is comfortable and happy at mealtimes, and over time, their level of interest should increase.

2. Baby is not touching food

- Some babies may have sensitivities and may not like to touch foods that feel wet, soft, mushy, grainy, or sandy. If your baby is not touching their food, offer it to them in loaded spoons. Try to offer toys and objects with different textures for your baby to become familiar with during playtime.



3. Baby is fussy at meals

- Babies may be fussy at meals because they are overly tired. If they are moody, skip the meal and allow them to rest. Try to feed them later when they are in a better mood.

4. Gagging

- Watching babies gag can make parents very uncomfortable. Gagging is a normal part of the learning process. It is a reflex that helps protect babies from choking on solids.
- If gagging makes you uncomfortable, try to understand why it is making you feel that way and learn how to help support your baby through baby-led weaning. Give smaller portions to your baby and learn about safe ways to offer foods to help you feel confident.
- In addition, consider taking a CPR class to feel more confident in an emergency.



5. Baby overstuffing their mouth with food

- Babies need to practice learning how deep their mouths are and how to pace themselves when eating. It's important not to overreact when your baby does overstuff their mouth. Babies who crave connection with their parents perceive significant reactions as positive ones, even if the reaction is negative.
- If your child is prone to putting a lot of food in their mouth, try to teach them pacing by eating meals with them and opening your mouth to show them how much food is in there.

You can also try putting small amounts of food in front of them and refilling their tray once they finish.

6. Baby throwing food

- Most babies will go through a phase of throwing food off their plates. The most important thing parents can do when babies throw food is not to overreact. Babies crave their parent's attention, whether it is positive or negative. Eating with your baby and showing them proper mealtime behavior is helpful.
- When your baby throws food, try to redirect them back to the meal by offering a sip of water or a new utensil. Offering small portions can also be helpful because there is less to throw — and you can always refill their tray if they need more food. Encourage positive behaviors by applauding them and saying, "I love how you chew your banana!"
- Ending the meal when they start throwing food can also help them realize that specific behavior will end mealtime.

7. Refusing to sit in a highchair

- Babies may refuse to sit in the highchair when tired or not hungry. If your baby is refusing the highchair, you can take a break and try feeding them again later. If they continue to refuse the highchair, try to make them feel more included by removing their tray and pulling them up to the table while you eat with them. If they continue to be upset, take a break from the highchair for a week or two and feed them on your lap or another safe place. Revisit the highchair after that break has ended.

Written by: Pegah Jalali, MS RD