



PLANT-BASED
Health Professionals UK

Promoting Sustainable Health and Nutrition

Introducing peanuts to your baby: the sooner the better

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Peanuts are a nutrient dense food and therefore one of the best foods for babies and children. Preventing peanut allergy would be especially positive for vegan babies and children.



Half a teaspoon of
peanut butter
provides



30% protein
30-35% phosphorus, magnesium
30-35% vit B6
15-20% vit B1 and E
100% vit B3
of daily requirements
(for a 6-7 month old baby)

Peanut allergy is a frequent problem in childhood and can be serious. It affects around 2% of children in the UK, and it's prevalence in Western countries seems to have increased in recent years. However, an observational [study from King's College London and Tel Aviv University](#) published in 2008 found that peanut allergy in UK Jewish children was 10 times higher than Jewish children in Israel where peanuts are introduced at an earlier age. A further randomised clinical trial by the [US National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#) found that early introduction of peanuts to children led to an 81% reduction in the risk of developing allergy.

Based on these data, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases published [new recommendations](#) for the introduction of peanuts in babies' diets in 2017.

The NHS has adopted these guidelines, which can now be found in [Your pregnancy and baby guide](#)

- Babies who already have severe eczema, any other food allergy or both, should have peanut-containing foods introduced into their diets as early as four to six months of age to reduce the risk of developing peanut allergy. In many cases these babies would benefit from an allergy blood or skin test before they start eating peanuts, so a consultation with a paediatric allergist is advisable.
- Babies with mild or moderate eczema should have peanuts introduced (and maintained) into their diets around six months of age to reduce the risk of peanut allergy.
- Babies without eczema or any food allergy should have peanut-containing foods freely introduced into their diets.

What is the best way to start giving babies peanuts?

- When your baby shows that he or she is ready for solid foods (usually when they are around six months old, but every baby is different), start offering them some low allergenic foods (banana, avocado, rice, sweet potato...). After these few first foods have been tolerated, start introducing peanuts and other potentially allergenic foods (soya, wheat, nuts). Give your baby one allergenic food at a time, and wait 2-3 days before giving them another.
- If any allergic reaction occurs, stop using the new food and ask your doctor.
- Smooth peanut butter is the best way to give babies peanuts. It can be mixed with porridge, mashed sweet potato or mashed pumpkin. Make sure the mixture is not too thick, and stir it well. A thin layer of peanut butter can also be spread on toast or banana slices.
- Do not use crunchy peanut butter and **do not give whole peanuts or other whole nuts to babies or children younger than 4-5 years, as the risk of choking on them is very high.**
- If your baby has severe eczema or has had an allergic reaction to any food, talk to a paediatric allergist first to decide when and how to introduce peanuts.

