

Trouble Transitioning to Solid Foods

Transitioning to Solid Foods

The muscles in the lips, cheeks and mouth help your child eat and talk. When these muscles are too tight, weak or lack coordination, your child can have trouble eating new foods.

Your child could also have trouble controlling his or her response to the touch, texture, taste and temperature of new foods.

This may cause reactions such as:

- gagging easily
- spitting out food
- refusing to try new foods.

If you think your child is having trouble transitioning to solid foods, talk with your child's health care provider. He or she may recommend that your child have a feeding evaluation.

Feeding Evaluation

Your child's health care provider may recommend that your child meet with an occupational therapist and speech therapist (speech-language pathologist) for a feeding evaluation. The therapists will:

- watch how your child uses his or her lips, tongue and cheeks to move food around the mouth and swallow
- see how your child tolerates different textures, temperatures and tastes of food.

They will also ask questions about your child's eating patterns at home.

In some cases, the therapists may recommend that your child:

- have a videofluoroscopic swallowing study. This test is like a movie, or video, that takes moving pictures of food and liquid as your child swallows them. It can help the therapist determine if your child has any swallowing problems.
- see a physical therapist. He or she will check if your child's posture, strength and ability to remain seated are affecting how your child eats.

Before the evaluation

Before your child's evaluation, watch his or her eating habits. You will be given forms to write down the following information:

- type of food
- amount of food eaten
- how long it takes for your child to eat
- when your child eats (does he or she eat meals or does he or she snack all day)
- where your child eats.

After the evaluation

The therapists will recommend treatment or activities you can do with your child at home. This may include play and eating activities to help improve your child's eating abilities.