

## **Early introduction of solid foods for infants may be detrimental**

**Question:** I introduced cereal into my infant's diet in his fourth month and it seems he is colicky since. When is the correct time to introduce solid foods into an infant's diet?

**Answer:** An infant's digestive system is not mature enough to absorb and accommodate solids until approximately it's 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> month of life. Introduction of cereals and solids prematurely is only a pacifier to deceive the infant's stomach to feeling full therefore giving the baby a false sense of complacency. The short-term effect is possible prolonged sleeping period or temporary calmness. The long-term effect has much more potential complications. Many authorities believe, and I have personally observed this in my clinical setting, these infants with pre-mature solid food feedings develop allergies and digestive disturbance in their first years of life.

This is a quote from Larry Palevsky, M.D. in his recent article, which describes the situation clearly; "Infants and children are not simply small adults, especially when it comes to feeding and nourishing their little bodies. They are less able than adults to receive, transform and assimilate the nutrients given to them. Infants and children are born with immature digestive systems. Digestive enzymes are not as plentiful and efficient. Intestinal materials, including undesirable particles, are more readily absorbed into the bloodstream through the lining of the digestive tract. Their digestive capacity may be weakened or impaired due to an early exposure to poor dietary choices and environmental

stressors. The weakness can persist well into adulthood increasing the likelihood of chronic childhood and adult illnesses.”

The best food for babies is still and will always be its mother’s milk and I must emphasize as always, breast feeding enhances your child’s immune system and digestive tract more than any other alternative foods. If nursing just cannot be accomplished then wait until your baby’s digestive tract is mature before introducing solids.

**Quote of the week:** *“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen of even touched – they must be felt with the heart.”* – Hellen Keller