

When Your Baby Is Ready to Use a High Chair

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Every baby will be a little different, but most parents can expect that their little one will be ready to sit up in a high chair around 4 to 6 months.

Many parents are eager for this time because transitioning into a chair can free you up a little in the kitchen and at the table. It also lets your baby join in some of the family's activities, which is great for social development.

In order to know when the time is right, there are some key developmental milestones to look for before placing your baby in the high chair. Sitting up without support and starting to eat solid foods are good indicators that your baby is ready for a high chair.

When Can Baby Sit in a High Chair?

Once a baby can sit upright without support, they're developmentally ready to sit in a high chair. They should show fairly good stability and control when seated, with only a slight bobbing about. The ability to hold their head up is also a must.

Every high chair manufacturer will have an age recommendation for each chair. Most recommend waiting until a baby is 6 months old before using a high chair. This is a good starting point, but you'll want to make sure your baby is ready. After all,

each child develops at a different rate. For safety reasons, you don't want to rush it.

Meeting this milestone comes with benefits for both babies and parents. With your baby in a high chair, you can be hands free during mealtimes to prepare and eat your own food or assist other children, and your baby can start to learn how about the socialization and family interaction that happens around the table.

Choosing a High Chair

Whether selecting a high chair, make sure to check out all your options. Considering the following qualities can help you make the right choice for your lifestyle, space, and personal preference when it comes time to shop for a high chair.

- **Cleaning:** The last thing you want is a high chair that you have to completely take apart in order to clean. Look for high chairs with removable, washable covers and few nooks or areas where crumbs and liquids can get trapped.
- **Durability:** You want to be able to use the same high chair for at least two years, so make sure that you choose one that is built to last. A high chair should also be sturdy enough that it won't easily tip over.
- **Safety features:** A well-secured safety strap should be used for the sitting position in high chairs to help prevent injury. In the reclining position, a five-point safety harness is a must for young babies, so it's important to ensure that the high chair you pick has these safety features. Also check to ensure that the chair does not have easily accessible areas where small fingers may get caught or pinched.
- **Size:** If you're trying to fit a high chair into a small space, consider shopping for a high chair that clips onto the table or one that can be folded and stored when not in use. If you will need to take your baby's high chair other places like on vacation or to a babysitter's home, consider looking for travel high chairs that are easily transported.
- **Wheels:** High chairs with wheels are very convenient, especially if one parent is home with the baby alone and needs to multitask while the baby eats. Be careful to test out the locking mechanism on the wheels, and know how to do it on the fly.
- **Versatility:** High chairs with features like a removable tray and seat height adjustments can more easily grow with your child, so these features are important to keep in mind.

After making your purchase, be sure to keep a record of the make and model number of your baby's high chair. It's also a good idea to register it with the company. It's a simple step you can take just in case there is a manufacturer's recall for safety or any other reason and allows you to take immediate action.

Reclining High Chairs

If your baby is not quite at that stage and you want to begin using a high chair, consider purchasing a high chair with a reclining seat. These can be used in the upright position as well, so you'll get plenty of use out of it as they grow.

Many parents find the reclining position convenient to use as a resting place for their baby. Perhaps the reclining high chair serves as a good seat with a view as parents prep dinner. It can also work out well for those hurried moments when you're bottle-feeding your baby with one hand while eating your own dinner with the other.

It's not advisable to use the reclining position when you begin feeding baby food to your little one.

Baby High Chair Safety

As you move your little one into the high chair, keep a few important safety tips in mind:

- Always strap babies in, either with a five-point harness or a safety strap.
- Before every use, take a moment to look over the chair. Make sure everything's where it should be and that there is no damage to the chair.
- If your chair can fold, make sure that the locking mechanism is securely in place before use.
- Ensure that the high chair is stable and cannot be tipped over easily.
- Keep the high chair close to you at all times. You should be able to see your baby from wherever you are. Make sure it's not within reach of table or countertops, too.
- Never leave babies unattended in a high chair.

As important as it is for the baby to feel comfortable in the high chair, it's just as important that anyone who will be supervising baby during meal times is familiar with how it works. Know how the chair folds, where the locking mechanism is

located, how to secure the straps correctly, and how to remove the tray.

These aren't things you want to learn once the baby is in the chair. They're also things you'll want to be able to show anyone who will be around during baby's mealtimes.

Getting Baby Started in a High Chair

A great tip for starting solid food is to get your baby familiar with being seated in the high chair in the weeks before you actually start solids. Let them take the chair out for a "test drive" and allow them to become comfortable in their new little throne. Give them a plate, cup, and spoon to play with and you'll have one less obstacle to overcome when it comes time to start solid foods.

Most babies are ready to begin the transition to eating solid foods between 4 and 6 months of age. While every baby is different, some key indicators that your baby is ready to eat solid foods align with when they are ready to sit in a high chair including the ability to sit up unassisted with solid head and neck control.

For some babies, getting to be part of the social interaction during meals is key to allowing everyone to eat in relative peace. Make sure the high chair is positioned in a way that baby can see you and feel part of the party, but not within reach of things on the table that is hot or sharp.

A Word From Verywell

Once your baby is ready to sit in a high chair, it makes mealtimes for mom and dad a lot less hectic. You may even be allowed to finish a meal for a change. Just make sure the baby (and you) are ready for this big step.

6 Sources

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process to learn more about how we fact-check and keep our content accurate, reliable, and trustworthy.

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