

## COMPLEMENTARY FEEDING OF INFANTS IN NORTHWEST CROATIA

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### Abstract

After six months of life, exclusive breastfeeding is no longer sufficient for normal growth and development of a baby; therefore, fruit, vegetables and other foods are introduced in nutrition. The paper aims to present the complementary feeding timeline for infants and preterm infants, to determine the specifics of the complementary feeding timeline for children with positive medical family history (for diabetes mellitus, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, celiac disease, food allergy), and to determine the food which causes reactions when introducing complementary feeding.

The results have been collected through the survey of 211 parents of infants in Čakovec General Hospital, Croatia, and family medicine office, and through the web service. The questionnaire consisted of demographic questions, questions about medical family history, about breastfeeding, initiation of complementary feeding, type and origin of puree, the introduction of allergens into nutrition, food which causes reactions when initiating complementary feeding, liquids which infants consume. The results obtained were analyzed using statistical data analysis software.

Complementary feeding of infants is usually initiated at the age of five or six months, while with the preterm infants at approximately six to twenty-one months. The average duration of breastfeeding is six to eight months. The ratio of milk and complementary food, regardless of the time of introduction of solid meals, is equalized after the age of one year and is approximately 30 : 70 in favor of solid meals. Most parents use their own home-made purees. Allergens are introduced approximately at the age of thirteen months. Their introduction is related to the initiation of complementary feeding and depends on the allergen itself. In infants with positive medical history, the average time of complementary feeding initiation is 6 months. Carrot, banana and milk products have been reported to cause stomach or skin problems.

We can conclude that parents respect pediatric recommendations regarding breastfeeding and initiation of complementary feeding. However, we point out that the earlier initiation of complementary feeding leads to an earlier stop of breastfeeding.

**Key words:** *Complementary feeding, Breastfeeding, Puree, Allergens.*