Today’s piece was prepared by Dacey Brooke, MD based on a NY Times article [For Babies, Solid Food at 3 Months May Lead to Sounder Sleep](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/17/well/eat/for-babies-solid-food-at-3-months-may-lead-to-sounder-sleep.html).

The article summarizes research on early solid food in infants and its effect on sleep habits. This study randomized 1303 infants to either exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months or introduction of solid foods at 3 months. Parents filled out a standardized survey about their child’s sleep habits. This study found that infants who had gotten solid food early were sleeping 17 minutes longer per night with 9% less nighttime awakenings, and these differences persisted through 1 year of age.

This short article raises interesting questions about ideal timing for solid food introduction, but the clinical applicability of this article is questionable given the omission of some information. The primary question that emerges is if 17 minutes a night (approximately 2 hours per week cumulatively) is at all clinically significant in child health and development, particularly if this means that the infants receive less breast milk. The outcome measure is also of uncertain accuracy, given that it was based on a subjective survey filled out by likely sleep-deprived parents. There is also no mention of infant growth in the article, which is an important developmental consideration when solid foods are substituted for high-calorie breast milk. Finally, the article fails to mention that this was a secondary analysis on a secondary outcome, meaning that this study was not powered to detect this particular outcome. Were parents to interpret this study as medical advice, there is also the risk of introducing solid foods to infants before they are ready, which could lead to feeding problems or lack of adequate growth.

**RESOURCES FOR PARENTS ON FEEDING & TRANSITIONS:**

[HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Switching-To-Solid-Foods.aspx) *AAP website link on Nutrition that provides a balanced, thoughtful approach to introducing solid foods and is a good resource for parents with questions about feeding transitions.*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!