



Feeding your baby:

Introducing family meals

Revised Edition 2018



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Introduction

All parents want the best for their baby as they grow. What babies and young children eat and drink is important for their health both now and in the future. The information in this booklet is based on up-to-date scientific evidence and will help you get your baby's healthy eating habits off to a good start. By the time your baby is 1 year of age they should be able to eat most meals enjoyed by the rest of the family.

**Feeding
your baby**

When to start

From birth, breastmilk or formula milk meets all your baby's needs for food and drink to help them grow and develop. From 26 weeks they will begin to need more iron and nutrients than breastmilk or formula milk alone can provide. Introducing foods at this age also helps them develop important skills such as learning to feed themselves and the different textures help develop muscles that are important for speech.

Signs that your baby may be ready for solid foods:

- not fully satisfied with their milk feed,
- begin to demand milk feeds more frequently (this lasts for longer than one week),
- shows more interest in food, may begin reaching out for foods,
- watches with interest when others are eating food,
- chews and dribbles more often, and
- is able to sit up with some support.

These signs show that your baby is ready for you to begin introducing foods other than milk.

Babies who are breastfed can continue to be breastfed while they are starting family foods and up to 2 years of age and beyond. There is no need to move from breastmilk to formula milk when introducing solid food.



**Not before 17 weeks
(4 months) because**

Their kidneys and digestive system are not mature enough to handle food and drinks other than milk.

There is an increased risk of coeliac disease, Type 1 diabetes and allergy.

It increases the risk of obesity in later life.

**Not later than 26 weeks
(6 months) because**

Their energy needs can no longer be met by breast milk or infant formula alone.

Iron stores from birth are used up by 6 months and their iron needs can no longer be met by milk alone.

It delays their opportunity to learn important skills, including self feeding.

Introducing different textures stimulates the development of muscles involved in speech.

If your baby was born early (pre term - earlier than 37 weeks) you should begin introducing foods other than milk sometime between 4 and 6 months corrected age. It is important to look for signs that your baby may be ready for solids (see page 2). If you have concerns check with your doctor or public health nurse.



Introducing family foods - at a glance

Stage 1 about 6 months	Stage 2 6-9 months	Stage 3 9-12 months
Puréed foods, starts with quite thin ('runny') consistency, gradually getting thicker as your baby gets used to taking foods from a spoon.	Moves to mashed foods from a spoon, gradually becoming lumpier in texture. Soft finger foods introduced. Starts to take drinks from a beaker or cup.	Moves to minced and chopped family foods. More textured finger foods. By 12 months of age bottles should be stopped and all drinks other than breastmilk should be taken from a beaker or cup.

The texture of first spoon feeds



Baby rice mixed with milk



Stewed apple

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Stage 1 about 6 months	Stage 2 6-9 months	Stage 3 9-12 months
<p>The aim is to introduce your baby to solid food and a variety of tastes. Introduce each food on its own for 2 days before introducing another food, for example baby rice, then pureed carrot. The closer to 26 weeks your baby is when you introduce solids foods, the quicker your baby should progress to stage 2.</p>	<p>The aim is to introduce variety into the texture of your baby's food. Offering a wide variety of foods at this stage has been shown to increase the variety of foods accepted by a baby as they grow. From 7 months you should encourage your baby to take finger foods. See page 14 for suggestions.</p>	<p>The aim is to move your baby onto eating family meals without added gravies, sauces, salt or sugar. Introducing lumpy foods is important to develop their ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speak, • chew a wider variety of foods, and • increase the variety of their diet in later childhood.

- Use breastmilk, formula milk or water to moisten their food to the correct consistency.
- Don't add salt or sugar to your baby's food. If making a family meal, remove their portion before adding salt.
- Don't use stock cubes, gravy, packets or jars of sauce when making family foods for your child.

The texture of first spoon feeds



Well mashed carrot



Well mashed potato

First Foods



Homemade food is best for your baby. Preparing homemade foods means you know exactly what your baby is eating and that they become familiar with the tastes and textures of family foods. See page 26 for some recipes and tips on preparing first foods for your baby.

Homemade first foods

Homemade foods can be relatively cheap to prepare compared to ready-made shop bought baby foods.

All equipment used to prepare foods for babies under 26 weeks (6 months) must be sterilised.

You can prepare batches of food and freeze in small portions in ice-cube trays. Cover the filled trays with a lid (cling film or freezer bags) before placing in the freezer. Label and date with a waterproof marker. Ideally use the meals within one month of freezing for better taste.

Defrost the amount of food you need for each meal. Reheat in a saucepan or microwave. Reheated food must be piping hot all the way through. Stir the food, allow to cool and then test the temperature in your mouth before giving it to your child, be aware of 'hotspots'.



Do not:

- re-freeze food once it has been taken from the freezer and thawed,
- re-heat food more than once, or
- keep unfinished meals for later.

Encourage your baby to touch and play with their food. Don't worry about the mess, it is important for them to learn how food feels in their hands and how to pick up different foods.

Your baby may refuse a new food. If they do, don't force them, offer another food that they are familiar with and wait 5-7 days before offering the refused food again. Babies and young children may need to be offered a food up to 15 times before they will accept it.

If your baby coughs or has difficulty with a thicker texture, move back to a thinner texture and wait a few more days before trying the thicker texture again.

Bowel motions

Bowel motions should be bulky and soft. Some parents find that their babies bowel motions change and become hard when they start introducing family foods. To help prevent this:

- include fruit and vegetables every day, and
- make sure your baby is getting enough drinks.

Give some cooled boiled water in a beaker in addition to their breastmilk or formula drinks.

Don't give your baby:

- honey or sugar
- unpasteurised cheese
- salt, gravies, packets or jars of sauce or soup, mealmakers
- undercooked eggs
- bran
- tea or coffee
- liver
- processed or cured meats (such as sausages, ham, bacon)
- high fat or high sugar foods (such as crisps, chocolate, cake, sweets), and
- whole or chopped nuts (as there is a risk of choking).

Never add rusks, cereals or other foods to your baby's bottle of milk. It makes the milk too concentrated and may be harmful to them.

Never leave a baby or young child alone during feeding and ideally feed them during family mealtimes.



Food Allergy

You should not avoid certain foods in your baby's diet in an attempt to prevent allergy. There is no benefit to delaying the introduction of peanut. Peanut in soft forms (e.g. pure nut butters that are sugar and salt free) should be introduced into the diets of healthy babies and those with mild eczema at 6 months, along with foods containing milk, egg, fish and tree nuts (for example cashew, almond, brazil, hazelnut, pistachio, walnut). You should introduce these foods one at a time.

Gluten

There is now no need to avoid gluten when you are introducing foods into your baby's diet. Gluten containing foods, in the appropriate consistency, for example bread, pasta, crackers and breakfast cereals can be introduced into your baby's diet anytime between 4 months (17 weeks) and 12 months of age in small amounts initially.



Getting started

Encourage your baby with plenty of eye contact, smiles and lots of chatting. Meal times can be a lovely time to interact with your baby. Try to involve your baby in family mealtimes and eat together as a family as often as you can.

You will need the following equipment:

- choose a high chair with a foot support so that your baby feels stable and can concentrate on learning to eat. Your baby should not slide around in their high chair. They should be well supported and comfortable,
- blender, liquidiser,
- steriliser for bowls and spoons,
- small bowl,
- feeding spoons with a short handle are easier for little hands to use and
- lidded beaker with a free flowing spout.



The first spoonfeeds

Solid food tastes and feels very different to milk. Your baby may spit out the food to begin with. This does not mean they don't like it. They're getting used to the new tastes and textures, the experience of having a spoon in their mouth and are learning to swallow.

Choose the right time, ideally a time when:

- you are not rushed or under pressure,
- your baby is not too hungry,
- your baby is alert and not tired,
- neither of you are distracted by TV, radio or other people.

Offer them some of their usual milk feed then introduce a few teaspoons of puréed food. Allow your baby time to get used to the taste and texture. Don't 'force feed' or rush them. Give them the rest of their usual milk feed when they have had enough.

Learning to drink from a beaker or cup

From about 6 months, begin giving your baby small drinks from a beaker or cup. Use a beaker with two handles and a free flowing spout, over time move to a beaker with no lid. Drinking from a cup or beaker rather than from a bottle helps your child baby to develop their swallow further.

By their first birthday, all drinks (other than breastfeeds) should be given from a cup or beaker with no lid. Your baby should not be using a bottle at all by their first birthday.



Baby led weaning

Baby led weaning is a way of introducing solid food by allowing your baby to choose what they eat and to feed themselves from the very start. It promotes the use of finger foods alone without you giving spoon feeds. Introduce foods close to 6 months. Introduce new foods one at a time and a day apart and build up to offering a variety of foods every day. It is important to offer your baby a varied and balanced diet and to consider the 'Important vitamins and minerals' on page 19.



**Stage 1 about 26 weeks (6 months)
not before 17 weeks (4 months)**

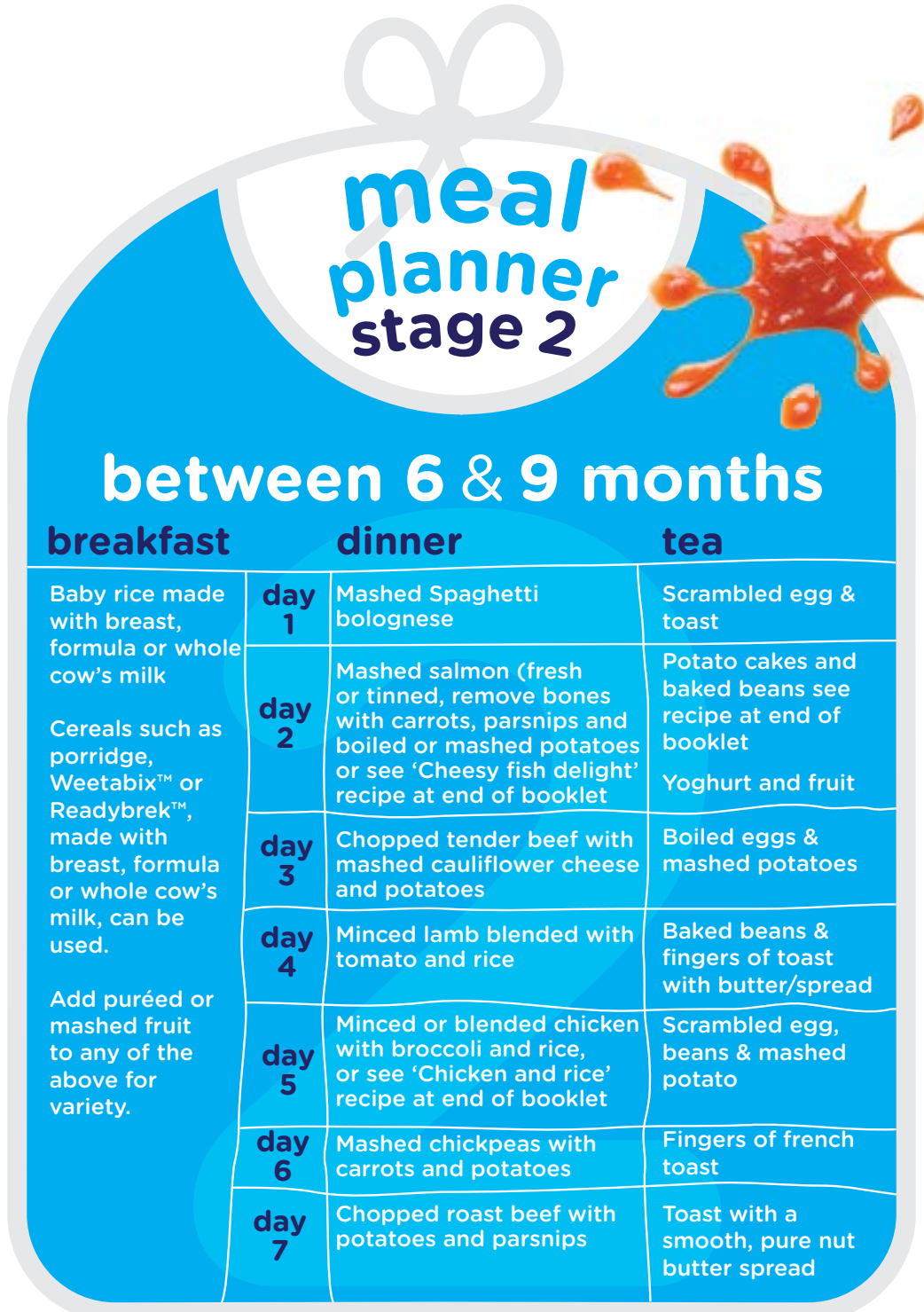
Foods to choose	Food Textures	Aim for	Skills learned	Suitable drinks
<p>Meat, poultry and fish made into a purée.</p> <p>Cereal, such as baby rice.</p> <p>Vegetables made into purée, such as carrot, parsnip, turnip, broccoli, cauliflower, butternut squash, courgette.</p> <p>Fruit made into a purée, such as banana, apple, pear, peaches, apricots, plums, melon.</p>	<p>Start with thin purées which will increase in thickness as baby gets used to solid food.</p>	<p>Start with 1 teaspoon of food made into a soft smooth purée.</p> <p>Build up to 6 teaspoons at one time.</p> <p>Next introduce solid food at another mealtime.</p> <p>Progress to 2-3 meals per day, with 5-10 teaspoons at each meal.</p>	<p>Taking foods from a spoon.</p> <p>Moving food from the front to the back of mouth for swallowing.</p> <p>Managing increasingly thicker purées.</p>	<p>Breast milk ("on demand").</p> <p>Infant formula.</p> <p>Cooled boiled water.</p>



Stage 2 between 6 and 9 months

Foods to choose	Food textures	Aim for	Skills learned	Suitable drinks
<p>Foods as in Stage 1, but now include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meat, poultry and fish. • well cooked eggs, • breakfast cereals • bread, rice and pasta, • cheese (pasteurised), • yogurt, • pasteurised cow's milk can be used in small amounts to moisten foods. 	<p>Thicker pureés: add less liquid to puree.</p> <p>Mash food with a little liquid.</p> <p>Soft finger food.</p> <p>Mix of textures: add a little mashed or grated food into baby's usual pureés.</p>	<p>Three meals a day, each about 2-4 tablespoons of food.</p> <p>Two to three snacks in between main meals.</p> <p>Finger foods.</p> <p>Foods should be offered before milk feed</p> <p>Some drinks taken from a cup or beaker.</p>	<p>Move from thick pureés, to mashed foods, to foods with soft lumps.</p> <p>Begins to feed themselves with soft finger foods.</p> <p>Drinking from a beaker or cup.</p>	<p>Breast milk (on demand).</p> <p>Infant formula, 3-4 feeds a day (approx. 600mls or 21ozs in total a day).</p> <p>Cooled boiled water.</p>





meal planner stage 2

between 6 & 9 months

breakfast

dinner

tea

Baby rice made with breast, formula or whole cow's milk

Cereals such as porridge, Weetabix™ or Readybrek™, made with breast, formula or whole cow's milk, can be used.

Add puréed or mashed fruit to any of the above for variety.

**day
1**

Mashed Spaghetti bolognese

Scrambled egg & toast

**day
2**

Mashed salmon (fresh or tinned, remove bones with carrots, parsnips and boiled or mashed potatoes or see 'Cheesy fish delight' recipe at end of booklet

Potato cakes and baked beans see recipe at end of booklet

Yoghurt and fruit

**day
3**

Chopped tender beef with mashed cauliflower cheese and potatoes

Boiled eggs & mashed potatoes

**day
4**

Minced lamb blended with tomato and rice

Baked beans & fingers of toast with butter/spread

**day
5**

Minced or blended chicken with broccoli and rice, or see 'Chicken and rice' recipe at end of booklet

Scrambled egg, beans & mashed potato

**day
6**

Mashed chickpeas with carrots and potatoes

Fingers of french toast

**day
7**

Chopped roast beef with potatoes and parsnips

Toast with a smooth, pure nut butter spread

Finger foods

Finger foods are an important step in learning to chew. You should offer and encourage your baby with suitable finger foods from 7 months old. Here are some finger food ideas that can be easily handled and enjoyed by your baby.

- Cooked vegetables e.g. carrot, parsnip, sweet potato, broccoli
- Peeled fruit e.g. pear, banana, peaches, melon, avocado.
- Raspberries, strawberries, grapes, cherry tomatoes – all cut into halves or quarters.
- Fingers of buttered toast
- Bread sticks
- Plain rice or corn cakes
- Cheese cut into strips
- Cooked pasta shapes e.g. fusilli or penne
- Sliced or shredded meats
- Fingers of french toast
- Slices of omelette
- Homemade pancakes
- Potato bread or soda bread
- Dry cereals

Corn snack/vegetable puff type finger foods for babies melt in your baby's mouth so they do not have to chew. You should offer more of the foods above rather than relying on these.



Stage 3 between 9 and 12 months

Foods to choose	Food textures	Aim for	Skills learned	Suitable drinks
Most homemade family foods (without added salt, gravies, sauces, packets or jars of sauce or sugar) are now suitable.	Lumpy foods. Chopped foods. Harder finger foods. Wide variety in foods and textures.	Three meals of about 4-6 tablespoons. Two to three snacks. Be able to manage more than two textures in one meal. All drinks (other than breastfeeds) taken from a cup or beaker.	Lumpier textures will help with speech, chewing and increase the variety of baby's diet in later childhood. Self feeding.	Breastmilk (on demand). Infant formula (approx 400mls or 14ozs a day). Cooled boiled water.





meal planner stage 3

between 9 & 12 months

breakfast

dinner

tea

Readybrek™ made with breast, formula or whole cow's milk	day 1	Meatballs in tomato sauce with pasta	Wholemeal fingers of toast with baked beans
Porridge made with made with breast, formula or whole cow's milk	day 2	Flaked cod, carrots and potatoes	Well cooked pasta with slices of cold chicken and cucumber
Weetabix™ made with breast, formula or whole cow's milk	day 3	Minced lamb or beef, carrots and potatoes	Boiled or scrambled egg with fingers of toast
Readybrek™ made with breast, formula or whole cow's milk	day 4	Flaked salmon, turnip, peas and potatoes	1 egg omelette with cheese, slice of pitta bread and hummus
Porridge made with breast, formula or whole cow's milk	day 5	Chopped chicken, broccoli and potatoes	Homemade soup and a sandwich
Weetabix™ made with breast, formula or whole cow's milk	day 6	Chilli con carne with rice	Fingers of toast with cheese spread and slices of tomato
Readybrek™ made with breast, formula or whole cow's milk	day 7	Flaked trout, parsnip and potatoes	Pasta shapes with tomato sauce and grated cheese

From their first birthday

From their first birthday your baby should be having around 3 meals a day with 2-3 healthy snacks in between. As they grow you can gradually increase the amount of food given at meal-times. It is important to make sure that children get just the right amount for their age – not too much and not too little.

- Give them a portion suitable for their age and appetite.
- Give smaller portions to begin with then let them ask for more if they are hungry.
- Use smaller plates and cutlery.
- Don't pressure them to eat all the food on their plate, allow them to stop when they say they are full.

Eating as a family is important as babies and children learn by example and often love to see and try what you are eating. This can encourage them to have a wide and varied diet.

If they say they are hungry shortly after a meal or healthy snack, offer them a drink of water or a small healthy snack.

Don't use foods, especially foods high in fat or sugar, as a reward or treat. Find different ways to reward your baby such as stickers or playing a game.

Healthy snack ideas

- A boiled egg and wholemeal toast soldiers.
- Chopped fruits such as apple or banana.
- A rice cake.
- Vegetable sticks such as soft cooked carrot.
- Yoghurt.
- Small wholemeal scone with butter.
- Beans on toast.
- Home-made soup.



Choose wholegrain bread, brown pasta and rice. These provide more fibre for your baby. For fussy babies or children mix brown and white pasta or rice to begin with.

Important vitamins and minerals

For healthy babies and young children a good mixed diet that includes a variety of foods will provide nearly all the vitamins and minerals they require. As you introduce foods other than milk it is important to continue to give your baby 5 microgram (5µg) Vitamin D3 supplement every day until they are one year old. If you have any questions about Vitamin D3 supplements or how to give them to your baby talk to your Public Health Nurse or doctor.

If your baby was ill or premature you should follow your doctor's advice in relation to vitamin and mineral supplements.

	Why	Good food sources
Iron	Important for brain development between 6 months to 2 years of age.	Meat (this form of iron is easily absorbed). Red meat – beef, pork, lamb Poultry – chicken, turkey Non-meat sources (this form of iron is not so easily absorbed). Eggs. Baked beans, lentils, chickpeas, Dark green leafy vegetables (cabbage, broccoli, spinach) Cereals with added iron Dried fruits (raisins, sultanas, apricots).
Vitamin C	Helps the absorption of iron in the body when eaten at the same time as non meat sources	Oranges or mandarins. Plums. Berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries). Kiwi fruit. Broccoli. Cauliflower. Peppers.
Omega-3 fats	Essential for brain and eye development.	Breastmilk. Oily fish (salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines) – tinned, fresh or frozen. Include two 1oz portions of oily fish a week from 7 months of age.
Calcium	Important for good bone development.	Oily fish (salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines) – tinned, fresh or frozen. Eggs. Fortified breakfast cereals.

Drinks

Breast milk or infant formula should be used as the main milk drink until one year of age. Cooled boiled water can be offered as extra fluid.

Breastfeeds

Give on demand throughout the day.

Formula milks

Stage 2 of solid food 6-9 months, 3-4 feeds about 600mls (21 oz) per day

Stage 3 of solid Food 9-12 months about 400ml (14 ozs) per day

Follow-on-milks are not necessary or recommended.

Fruit juices are not recommended, they contain sugar so can damage your baby's teeth.

The following drinks are not suitable for children under 1 year of age:

- cow's milk,
- sheep's milk or rice milk,
- tea or coffee, even decaffeinated varieties,
- fruit juice drinks or fizzy drinks,
- sports or energy drinks, or
- dilutable squashes.

Soya-based infant formula is not generally recommended for babies under 6 months of age. It is not suitable for children with an intolerance or allergy to cow's milk protein or lactose.

From 1 year of age encourage your child to have:

- Maximum of 1 pint of whole cow's milk a day (includes milk used on cereals) – infant formula is not necessary, or
- Breastmilk on demand.
- All drink other than breastmilk should be from a cup or beaker.

**Low-fat milk should not be given to children under 2 years.
Skimmed milk should not be given before 5 years of age**



Commercial baby food

Commercial baby food are baby foods sold in jars and pouches. Try not to rely on these foods every day.

They are more expensive and less nutritious than preparing food at home. Why not offer your baby family foods suitable for their stage without added gravies, sauces, sugar or salt? By doing this you know exactly what your baby is eating.

Many ready made baby foods have a similar flavour base so taste the same to your baby. If you are using these foods it is a good idea to add in some of your homemade food to make the taste, texture and appearance more interesting, allowing your baby get used to different flavours and textures.

Shop bought baby foods often come in pouches. Sucking food from a pouch does not teach the same eating skills as eating from a spoon or with your fingers.

If your baby sucks food from a pouch they will not get the aroma or know the colour or shape of the food.

If you are offering a food pouch it is important to put the food into a bowl and feed it from a spoon to your baby.

Allow your baby to get used to having food on their hands and around their mouth.

If you do use commercial baby foods, choose savoury meals rather than desserts or puddings, as deserts and puddings can be high in sugar. Corn snack/vegetable puff finger foods for babies are widely available to buy. These melt in your baby's mouth so they do not have to chew. It is important to offer textures from the list of finger foods on page 15 so that your baby learns how to chew.

Your baby's teeth

Begin caring for your baby's teeth before they appear.

- Milk and water (boiled and cooled for children up to 1 year of age) are the most tooth-friendly drinks.
- Use sugar free medicines.

As you introduce your baby to family foods:

- choose healthy snack, choices include fresh fruit (not dried), vegetables, plain yogurt, cheese and bread,
- do not give fruit juices,
- prepare homemade foods, food packaging labelled as 'no added sugar' or 'low sugar' does not mean they are sugar free,
- only give healthy sugary snacks such as dried fruit at mealtimes,
- never add sugar to their foods,
- do not allow your baby to suck from pouches of fruit puree or smoothies.

Foods high in fat, sugar or salt, such as biscuits, crisps, chocolate, sweets, ice-cream or fizzy drinks should not be a regular part of your child's daily diet at any age.

From when their first tooth appears:

- clean gently with a soft toothbrush and water, and
- fluoride toothpaste is not suitable for children under 2 years of age. After 2 years, a pea-sized amount of toothpaste can be used.

Common questions parents have

What should I do if my baby will not eat?

Do not worry as babies and young children, like adults, can have 'off days'. If food is refused take the food away and give breastmilk or formula milk. If the problem continues, contact your public health nurse.

My baby is 12 weeks old and is not sleeping through the night. Will giving him solid food now help him sleep?

There is no evidence that introducing solid food will effect how long a baby sleeps.

My child was a big baby when born. Won't he need solid food earlier?

The weight of your baby at birth does not effect when they will be ready for solid food, their digestive system and kidneys develop at the same rate as other babies. The earliest age at which solid food should be introduced is 17 weeks of age and ideally closer to 26 weeks of age. Remember to also look out for developmental signs (page 2) that your baby is ready for solid foods.

My baby gags when I give him lumpier food.

Gagging is a normal reflex babies have as they learn to eat and swallow. We all have a 'gag' reflex, it is a response that helps prevent choking. Gagging is a sign that your baby is protecting their airway and clearing food from the back of their mouth.

Gagging brings food forward into your baby's mouth so that your baby can chew it more or try to swallow a smaller amount.

Try to stay calm. Your baby should gag less often as they develop and learn to regulate the amount of food they swallow.

If you have any questions or concerns about your baby's gagging, you should speak to your Public Health Nurse or doctor. Some parents may be tempted to avoid offering lumpier textures, but in order for gagging to lessen, you must repeatedly offer your baby lumpier textures so that they will learn to eat and swallow.

Can I give bottled water to my baby?

Bottled water is not sterile and should be boiled and cooled the same as tap water for all babies' until they are 12 months old. It is best not to use bottled water that is labelled as 'Natural Mineral Water' as it can have higher levels of sodium and other minerals. However, it can be used if no other water is available, for as short a time as possible, because it is important to keep your baby hydrated.



Does my baby need follow-on formula milk?

There should be no need for follow-on formula milks, provided your child has a nutritious diet with some iron-rich foods. Continue with breastmilk or formula milk until 1 year. From 1 year breastmilk or cow's milk should be used as the main drink.

Is it safe to microwave baby foods?

Because the food is heated unevenly, there is a danger of 'hotspots' and a risk of scalding your baby's mouth. For this reason you need to be very careful if using microwaves to heat food for babies and young children. If you choose to use a microwave to heat food, the food must be thoroughly heated, left to stand for a few moments, mixed well and allowed to cool to feeding temperature.

My baby is refusing foods. Is he a fussy eater?

It is quite normal for babies and young children to refuse foods occasionally. Remember it may take up to 15 tries before they will accept a new food. Make sure they are not filling up on extra milk, drinks or snacks too close to mealtimes. Keep distractions to a minimum; turn off the television and eat family meals with your child so that they can learn from you. If they refuse certain foods, try again a few days later. Do not offer sweet foods such as yogurts instead of savoury foods as they will soon learn that if they refuse dinner they can still get dessert. Just remove the food and wait until the next meal or snack. For most this is a phase that passes.



Recipes



Here are some recipes to help you prepare homemade foods for your baby.

Stage 1 about 26 weeks (6 months)

First vegetable purée

2 medium vegetables (such as carrot, parsnip, broccoli or cauliflower) washed, peeled, trimmed and sliced with stalks removed. Boil or steam until soft. Drain, but keep the cooking liquid as this can be used to correct consistency. Purée the vegetables (use a blender or mash first then push through the sieve) and add water from cooking or milk to correct consistency.

Spoon a little purée into baby's bowl and serve lukewarm. Pour remainder into ice cube trays, allow to cool, cover and freeze.

Start by giving vegetables one at a time, but when baby gets used to individual vegetables, combine these vegetables to add interest, such as carrot and parsnip or broccoli and cauliflower.

Creamy vegetables

Add one spoon of baby rice to puréed vegetables and milk



First fruit purée

2 pieces of fruit (such as eating apples, pears, peaches, apricots or melon) washed, peeled and chopped with core removed

4 tablespoons water

Put the fruit and water in a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Cover and simmer for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until soft. Purée the fruit (use a blender or mash first then push through the sieve).

Spoon a little purée into baby's bowl and serve lukewarm. Pour remainder into ice cube trays, allow to cool, cover and freeze.

Fruit combinations also work well, such as apple and pear or peach and apricot. After the first few weeks, ripe pears can be blended or sieved without cooking. Ripe bananas can also be mashed and softened with a little milk if necessary.

Creamy fruit

Add one spoon of baby rice to four spoons puréed fruit and milk.



Recipes

Stage 2

between 6 and 9 months

Chicken and rice

75g (3oz) chicken fillet

½ cup rice

50g (2oz) mixed vegetables, such as carrots, parsnips

150mls (¼ pint) of water

Cut chicken into small pieces. Wash, peel and chop vegetables. Simmer chicken and vegetables in the water for 20-30 minutes, strain but keep the cooking water.

Cook rice in boiling water (10-12 minutes).

Drain rice and add to the cooked chicken and vegetables. Add a little of the cooking water from chicken/vegetable mixture to moisten. Mash or purée, depending on your baby's weaning stage.

Cheesy fish delight

25g (1oz) butter/margarine

1 tablespoon plain flour

100ml (4floz) milk

**25g (1oz) hard cheese grated,
such as cheddar (optional)**

100g (4oz) cooked fish, such as salmon

2 tablespoons (cooked) frozen vegetables

1 small mashed potato fresh or frozen



To make sauce, melt the margarine/butter in a saucepan, stir in the flour and cook for two minutes. Gradually add the milk, stirring continuously. Bring to a gentle boil. Remove from the heat. Add grated cheese, if using. Carefully remove bones from fish or drain tinned fish. Mash fish with vegetables and potatoes. Stir into the sauce. Makes 2 portions.

Any tinned fish, cooked white fish or cooked chicken can also be used in this recipe.

Always be careful to remove even the very small bones from the fish and to drain tinned fish.

First pasta Bolognese

1 teaspoon vegetable oil

1 finely chopped onion

1 small clove garlic, crushed

1 medium carrot, peeled and grated

100 g (4oz) lean minced beef

1 tin chopped tomato

100 ml boiling water

¼ teaspoon fresh herbs or a pinch of dried herbs (such as thyme, basil or oregano)

3 tbsp pasta shapes or spaghetti



Heat the oil in a saucepan, add the onion, garlic and grated carrot and cook over a low heat for about 5 minutes. Remove from the pan. Add the minced beef to the pan (no extra oil needed) and fry until browned, stirring occasionally.

Add back in the onion/garlic/carrot mixture and tin tomatoes, water and herbs.

Cover and cook over a low heat for about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the pasta according to the packet instructions.

Purée to desired consistency, depending on baby's weaning stage.

Recipes



Stage 3

9-12 months

Chicken Couscous

20g/¾ oz butter

60g/2oz chopped spring onion

60g/2oz chicken breast, chopped

30g/1oz parsnips

250mls/8½ oz boiled water

100g/3½ oz couscous

Heat the butter in a pan and cook the onions for 1 minute, add the chicken and cook through.

Steam or boil the parsnips until tender, then chop into small pieces.

Add the boiled water to the couscous, cover with cling film and leave to stand for 5 minutes.

After 5 minutes, fluff the couscous with a fork and add the cooked chicken and chopped vegetables.



Butternut squash with pasta

300g/10oz butternut squash – peeled and diced

2-3 tablespoons of pasta shapes

30g/1oz butter

1 tablespoon of parmesan cheese or cheddar cheese

Steam or boil butternut squash until tender.

When tender mash or blend with 4-5 tablespoons of the cooking water.

Lunch or tea-time ideas

French toast

1 egg

1 tablespoon milk

2 slices bread

1 teaspoon vegetable oil

Beat the eggs and milk together in a shallow bowl.

Dip the slices of bread in egg mixture. Heat the

oil in a large pan. Fry the bread until golden

brown. Drain on kitchen paper and serve.



Potato cakes and baked beans

- 1 medium potato**
- 1 tablespoon plain flour**
- 1 teaspoon butter/margarine**
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil**
- 1 tin of baked beans**



Peel, wash and roughly chop potato. Boil or steam until tender, drain and mash. Melt the butter or margarine and add to the mashed potato along with the flour. Turn on to a clean table top or floured board and knead until smooth. Flatten into a circle and cut into triangles. Heat oil in pan and cook triangles until brown on both sides. Heat baked beans according to instructions on the tin and serve with potato cakes.

This recipe is also a great way of using up leftover mashed potato. A pinch of mixed herbs or chopped onion could also be used to add flavour.

Makes two portions.





Introducing family meals

The information in this booklet is based on the most recent research and guidance provided by the Department of Health and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. See Scientific Recommendations for a National Infant Feeding Policy, 2nd edition.

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