



Introducing Solid Foods

Virtual Parenting Hub - Online advice, support,
and guidance empowering parents to work
through challenges and find solutions.



Introducing Solid Foods

- Introducing solid foods is a time of excitement for babies and parents, it signals a new chapter in your journey together. Introduce solid foods at around 6 months but not before 4 months. Continue to breast feed or formula feed your baby until they are 12 months old.
- It is important to offer solid foods when you and your baby are relaxed.
- Your baby needs to be sitting upright strapped into their highchair.
- Introducing iron rich foods is important at 6 months as baby iron levels start to drop and they will not get enough iron from breast milk or formula alone.
- Before you start solid foods, your baby should be showing signs that they are ready. It is important to be guided by your baby's development and behaviour.



Signs of Readiness

- Good head control, head is not falling forward when sitting upright
- Shows an interest in food and is watching what is on your plate
- Reaches out for food
- Leans forward for food
- Squeals for food
- Opens their mouth when you offer food



First Foods

- All cooked vegetables including, carrot, sweet potato, broccoli, cauliflower
- All cooked or soft fruits including pear, apple banana, avocado
- Grains including oats, quinoa, rice, breads, pasta
- Dairy foods including full fat yogurt, custards, cheese
- Full fat dairy milk can be used in the preparation of solid foods including custards and cereals but not given as a drink of milk until 12 months of age.



Iron Enriched First Foods

- Iron fortified baby cereal including rice or oatmeal. Mix the cereal with fruit and vegetables that are high in vitamin C, as this will help the absorption of iron
- Quinoa cereal
- Lean minced red meat, poultry, kangaroo, and fish
- Cooked egg, scrambled or mashed
- Cooked tofu and legumes



Solid Foods 6 to 8 months

- You can introduce foods in any order
- First foods need to be iron enriched
- The food needs to be the right texture, including pureed, soft, mashed
- If your baby is 6 months old, you can quickly move onto minced and chopped foods.
- If your baby is 6 months old, you can start with soft finger foods
- You can mix foods together; you do not need to introduce one food at a time
- Offering a variety of foods means they will be getting lots of different nutrients
- Continue to breast feed or formula feed as normal
- Offer milk before food
- Wait half to one hour after a breast/formula feed before offering solid food

- Start with offering one meal, move along with adding in the second and third meals when your baby is enjoying food and is confident with swallowing.
- Start with offering 1-2 teaspoons of food, then be guided by your baby's appetite
- When your baby turns their head away, clamps their mouth shut or pushes the spoon away, they are telling you they are full and have had enough food

How to prepare and cook first baby foods

- 1 Peel the skin off vegetables and fruit, trim the fat off meats and take the skin off the chicken.
- 2 Steam or boil the foods until soft and cooked
- 3 Puree or mash food, add cooking liquids as needed, remove bones from meat



Introducing Water

- Introduce cooled boiled water to your baby with solid foods, closer to 6 months.
- When your baby is 12 months old you can stop boiling the water
- Offer the cooled boiled water in a sippy cup
- Offer the cooled boiled water with each solid meal
- Your baby will only have a few sips of water to start with
- The water may dribble out of your babies mouth initially



Solid Foods 8-12 months

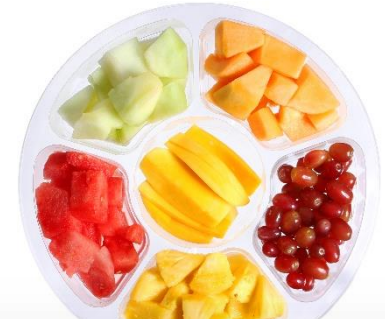
- Continue to offer a variety of foods
- Foods should be more textured, moving away from pureed foods
- Your baby needs a variety of textured foods so they can learn to chew, which helps speech development
- Offer more finger foods, encouraging your baby to be more independent with foods
- When your baby is 8-9 months old, reduce milk feeds to four daily, this will help your baby to be more interested in solid foods and not feeling too full after milk feeds.
- Your baby will now be having three solid meals daily
- Add in morning tea and afternoon tea snacks
- Your baby will be having cooled boiled water with each meal and in between milk feeds if thirsty

- Give your baby food before milk (swap), except first morning feed which will be a milk feed first
- Do not be concerned if your baby naturally starts to prefer solid foods rather than milk feeds and drops to three milk feeds daily
- When your baby is 12 months old, reduce milk feeds to two daily.
- When your baby is 12 months old, they will be eating family meals, with some foods chopped smaller
- From 12 months of age, you can offer rice, oat, almond milks if they are full fat, fortified with Calcium 100mg per 100ml and your baby is getting adequate iron and B12.



Great Ideas for Finger Foods

- Bite sized pieces of soft ripe fruits including banana, kiwi fruit, pear, watermelon, mango
- Bite sized steamed vegetables including sweet potato, broccoli, carrot, zucchini, corn kernels, peas, beans
- Salad sticks of vegetables like capsicum, cucumber, slices of tomatoes
- Dips including hummus, sweet potato, or guacamole to dip salad stocks into
- Wholegrain pasta with a sauce or pieces of steamed vegetables
- Hard-boiled egg or an omelette cut into pieces
- Quiche or zucchini slice cut into pieces
- Bite size pieces of cooked fish, chicken, tofu, soft red meat
- Mini meatballs, chicken, and vegetable nuggets
- Broccoli, chicken, and potato bites
- Fish and vegetable cakes
- Mini pasties
- Toast soldiers, spread with avocado, banana, nut paste or vegemite
- Small pikelets with blueberries, banana, grated apple



Allergy Foods

- Introducing allergy foods at 6 months can help reduce your baby from developing food allergies
- All babies including babies with other family members that have food allergies, or that are high risk should have these foods from 6 months
- Allergy foods include cooked eggs, smooth peanut butter, other nut pastes, wheat, dairy, tomato, strawberry, seafoods
- Introduce one allergy food at a time on a separate day
- See your Doctor if your family has a history of food allergies



Foods and Drinks to Avoid when introducing solid foods

- No honey until 12 months of age due to Botulism
- No hard-raw foods or whole nuts including raw carrot, apple, or peanuts due to choking
- Raw or runny eggs due to bacteria
- Foods high in sugar and salt
- Processed foods including cakes, biscuits, chips, lollies
- Reduced fat foods until 2 years
- Cows milk as a drink until 12 months
- Non fortified milks including rice, oat, coconut, almond before 2 years of age unless you have spoken to your Doctor
- Fruit juices due to high sugar content
- Tea, coffee, coca cola, sugar sweetened drinks
- Unpasteurised milks, all types



HOMEMADE FOOD TIPS

- Homemade food is ideal for your baby as you will know exactly what you are feeding your baby and can ensure meals are fresh and free from added colours and preservatives. Here are a few tips for preparing homemade meals:
- Refrigerate for up to two days
- Food can be stored in plastic or glass containers and kept for up to two days in the fridge.
- Make in bulk and freeze for future use - Homemade puréed food can be frozen so it is often more convenient to make up food in batches and freeze for future use. Place the food in clean ice cube trays and cover with plastic. You can freeze foods for up to 30 days.
- To serve - Pop out food cubes into a safe container and warm on the stove. Make sure you stir well to remove any hot spots. Test the temperature with a clean spoon before giving to baby and remember to discard any leftovers as they cannot be refrozen.



Enjoying Mealtimes

Family mealtimes are a great way for your child to learn healthy eating habits from you, this can set up healthy eating habits for life. Family mealtimes also strengthen relationships and give your child a sense of connection.

- Stay relaxed and positive at mealtimes
- Make family mealtimes a part of your daily routine
- Model healthy eating habits by having healthy foods on your plate
- Watching parents and siblings eat different foods will encourage your child to try new foods
- Sit your child in a highchair or small table and chairs when eating, rather than walking around with food, which can increase the risk of choking
- Allow your child to help prepare meals which will give them more interest in food
- Turn off the TV and other screens at mealtimes so you are not distracted and can focus on each other



Baby-Led Weaning

- Traditionally parents have been taught to introduce solid foods starting with soft pureed foods, grading up to mash using a spoon and then to soft finger foods.
- Baby-Led weaning is an approach to introducing solid foods, developed by Gill Rapely and Tracey Murkett. The guiding principle of this approach is to skip giving purees/mash using spoons and to allow your child to finger feed soft foods themselves from the beginning.
- Baby-Led Weaning is not recommended for babies who have a developmental delay or slowed growth.



Key elements of Baby-Led Weaning

- Baby needs to be 6 months old. Do not commence before this age.
- Baby needs to be sitting upright in a highchair
- Baby sits with the family at each meal and snack time.
- Baby is offered the same meal as everyone else, ensuring the food is soft and cut to a small size for the baby's developmental age
- Baby feeds themselves from the beginning and then learns to use cutlery
- Baby learns independence and self-feeding skills
- Baby can control how much they eat
- Baby may gag but these are not choking episodes
- Baby is exposed to a wide variety of foods, textures, and flavours
- Baby develops hand to mouth coordination, biting and chewing skills
- Hard pieces of food should be avoided due to risk of choking

The Best First Foods For Baby Led Weaning

- Soft Cooked apples
- Pumpkin
- Eggs
- Soft, cooked meat or poultry
- Liver
- Banana
- Bread, pasta, rice
- Pear, very ripe peaches
- Cooked peas
- Cooked corn kernels
- Steamed florets of broccoli and cauliflower
- Steamed sticks of carrot, zucchini
- Steamed small pieces of sweet potato

- Steamed pieces of pumpkin
- Steamed green/yellow beans
- Cooked meatballs (beef, chicken, turkey, lamb) mashed
- Cooked flaked salmon
- Scrambled egg pieces
- Hard boiled eggs cut into small pieces
- Small pieces of cooked tofu
- Grated cheese
- Raspberries/blueberries cut in half
- Small soft pieces of banana
- Small soft pieces avocado
- Small pieces of steamed apple and pear
- Cooked wholemeal pasta
- Cooked rice
- Small pieces pancakes
- Cooked fruit/savory muffins cut into pieces

Baby Led Weaning Foods to Avoid

- Honey
- High choking risk foods like grapes, nuts, popcorn
- Added salt or sugar
- Unhealthy processed foods like chips

Division of Responsibility in Feeding

- At every stage with feeding, parents take the leadership and let the child be self-directed with eating. The parent is responsible for **what** and the child is responsible for **how much**.

Infants

- When breastfeeding or formula feeding, help your baby to be calm and relaxed and then pay attention to our baby's cues as to when they are full and do not want anymore.
- The frequency of feeds may change between 2,3,4 hours, feed your baby when they are showing signs of hunger rather than sticking to a time limit.



Older Babies and Toddlers

- The parent is responsible **for what, when, where.**
- Parents need to trust their children to decide how much and whether to eat.
- The parent's role is to set the scene and the child's role is to decide how much they will eat.

Parent's feeding Jobs

- Choose and prepare the food
- Provide regular meals and snacks
- Make eating times pleasant and relaxed
- Show children what they must learn about food and mealtime behaviour
- Have understanding around children's food and taste inexperience
- No eating or beverages (except water) between mealtimes and snacks

Children's Eating Jobs

- Allow children to eat
- Allow children to eat the amount they need
- Children will learn to eat the food their parents eat
- Children will learn predictability
- Children will learn to behave well at mealtimes

Fussy Eating

It is very common for children aged 1-6 years to be fussy eaters. They may eat a certain food one day and not the next. Children have different taste preferences compared with adults.

Children are often interested in playing and exploring rather wanting to eat. Children can be strong willed about eating or not wanting to eat but this is all a part of their development.

Children will usually become less fussy the older they get.

How to manage Fussy Eaters

- Make mealtimes regular, happy, calm and a family occasion
- Do not worry about spilt foods or a mess on the floor
- Do not force your child to eat a food
- Do not offer bribes to your child as this sends a message that healthy food is a chore
- Do not react to fussy eating as this may encourage your child to keep behaving this way
- Make foods fun and colourful, cutting them into shapes
- Turn off the TV and other screens so you can focus on each other
- Set a time limit of 20 minutes, if the food is not eaten, take it away and do not offer more food until the next snack or mealtime
- It is the parent's responsibility to provide the healthy foods and calm environment and the child's responsibility to decide how much they will eat
- Get your child to help prepare foods including getting foods out of the fridge, washing fruits and vegetables, picking herbs/vegetables from the garden



Foods and Fussy Eaters

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INTRODUCING SOLIDS SUMMARY

- Continue breastfeeding or infant formula whilst foods are being introduced through the first year of life
- Start at around six months of age
- Introduce single foods
- First foods can be smooth, mashed, or in pieces, depending on your preference
- It is not necessary to add salt, sugar or preservatives to your baby's food
- There is no need to delay introduction of egg, peanut butter or fish even when there is a family history of allergy. Treat your baby as an individual
- Encourage a wide range of foods, fruit, vegetables, cereal, meat, fish, chicken, lentils, pasta, rice and bread
- Increase food texture to mashed, coarsely mashed, or pieces. Do not offer smooth or puréed foods for too long
- Homemade foods are recommended as you will know what you are feeding your baby
- Stay with your baby whilst eating
- Mealtime should be social, fun, relaxed and happy
- Encourage self-feeding when your baby shows interest. Remember it will be messy as he or she learns the important skills
- Avoid distractions during mealtime such as TV



Fruit: 1 serve = 1 medium apple, banana, orange or pear; or 2 small plums, kiwi fruits or apricots; or 1 cup diced or canned fruit drained (no added sugar). Offer ½ serve a day.



Vegetables: 1 serve = ½ medium potato (or sweet potato or corn); or ½ cup cooked vegies (broccoli, spinach, carrots, pumpkin); or 1 cup green leafy or raw salad vegies; or ½ cup cooked, dried or canned beans or lentils. Offer 2-3 serves a day.



Cereal and grains: 1 serve = 1 slice of bread; or ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, noodles, quinoa or polenta; or ½ cup porridge; or ⅔ cup wheat cereal flakes; or ¼ cup muesli; or 1 crumpet or small English muffin. Offer 4 serves a day – **wholegrain** is best.



Dairy: 1 serve = 1 cup (250 ml) milk or calcium-fortified non-dairy milk like soy or rice; or 2 slices cheese; or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (200 gm) yoghurt; or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ricotta cheese. Choose full-fat dairy. Offer 1-1½ serves a day.



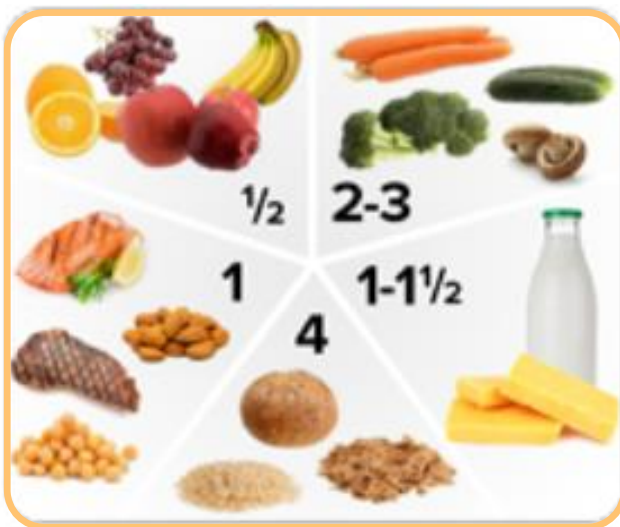
Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, legumes: 1 serve = 65 gm cooked lean beef, lamb, veal or pork; or 80 gm cooked lean chicken or turkey; or 100 gm cooked fish fillet; or 170 gm cooked tofu; or 2 large eggs; or 1 cup cooked lentils, chickpeas or canned beans; or $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons nut pastes and spreads (whole nuts can be a choking risk). Offer 1 serve a day.



Healthy fats: include a small amount (7-10 gm) of **unsaturated fats** – for example, 1 tablespoon of nut butter or $\frac{1}{4}$ avocado. Avoid **'sometimes' foods**. These are very high in saturated fat, sugar and salt.



At 1-2 years, toddlers need a **wide variety of healthy foods**. You decide what your child eats from the five food groups. He decides whether to eat and how much. Think about what he eats each week, rather than each day.



At this age, toddler appetites vary from day to day. Suggested daily **serve**s are $\frac{1}{2}$ serve of fruit; 2-3 serves of vegies; 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ serves of dairy; 4 serves of grains; and 1 serve of lean meats, eggs, nut pastes and legumes.



Toddlers need lots of **water** – the cheapest, healthiest and most thirst-quenching drink. They also need lots of milk. Avoid soft drinks, fruit juices, flavoured milk and water, sports drinks and energy drinks.

References

1. National Health and Medical research Council, Australian Government, Infant feeding guidelines
2. ellynsatterinstitute.org