

# baby comes 2 baby equipment hire



## Weaning

It is recommended that weaning starts from six months old, the amount of solid food a baby eats should then gradually increase so that by twelve months, solid foods become the main part of the baby's diet, with breast or formula milk making up the balance. The aim is to introduce a wide range of non-milk foods into the diet so, by a year old, they will be eating a varied diet.

All babies are different, some may start solid foods earlier, and take to it quickly and some start later and take longer. Just as some are choosy, and others seem to like everything.

Signs that a baby is ready to try solid foods are when they:

- can sit up
- wants to chew and is putting toys and other objects in their mouth
- reaches for food and grabs accurately.

Health experts agree that around six months is the best age for introducing solids. Before this, a baby's digestive system is still developing and weaning too soon may increase the risk of infections and allergies. Weaning is also easier at six months.

If weaning starts before six months, there are some foods that should be avoided as they may cause allergies or make a baby ill. These include

- wheat-based foods and other foods containing gluten (e.g. bread, rusks, some breakfast cereals),
- eggs,
- fish,
- shellfish,
- nuts,
- seeds
- soft and unpasteurised cheeses.

Solid foods should never be introduced before four months.

## **How to begin**

When the baby is ready to start on solid foods go at his or her pace. Allow plenty of time for feeding, particularly at first. The baby needs to learn to move solid food from the front of the tongue to the back, to swallow it and the food will taste and feel different.

Start by offering a small amount of mashed vegetable, fruit or cereal mixed with milk after a milk feed or in the middle of one, if this works better. Test the temperature of the food before giving it to the baby.

Be patient, let the baby touch the food if they want to, and be prepared for some mess.

Start by offering just a few teaspoons of food, once a day.

Use a little of the baby's usual milk (breast or formula) to mix the food to a soft smooth consistency.

Allow the baby to feed him/herself, using their fingers, as soon as they show an interest.

Give the baby a range of foods and textures to taste. The aim is to encourage him to eat a variety of family foods and adapt to your pattern of eating.

Don't force feed the baby. Most babies know when they've had enough to eat. If he doesn't seem to want it, wait and try again later.

If you are using a spoon, wait for the baby to open their mouth when the food is offered.

Let the baby touch the food in the dish or on the spoon.

Make sure the baby is sitting up straight and is facing forward. A highchair is best. This way the baby is able to explore foods better and will be less likely to choke.

Always stay nearby when the baby is eating to make sure that he or she doesn't choke.

## **How much and how often**

The amount of solid food you give will depend on how hungry the baby is so try to react to the baby's appetite, so if the baby is still hungry, you can give a little more. The baby is the best guide to how much solid food you need to give. Progress from offering solid food once a day to solid food at two and then three feeds. Offer different foods at each of the three meals to give more variety.

Offer foods from each of the following food groups:

- starchy – such as potatoes, yams, rice or bread
- fruit and vegetables
- protein – meat, fish, eggs, tofu or pulses such as beans and lentils.

Red meat (beef, lamb and pork) is an excellent source of iron. Eggs are a quick and nutritious source of protein, but make sure they are thoroughly cooked until both the white and yolk are solid.

From about nine months, you can offer the baby:

- three to four servings of starchy food each day, such as potato, bread and rice
- three to four servings of fruit and vegetables.
- two servings of meat, fish, eggs, dhal or other pulses.

By now the baby should be learning to fit in with the family by eating three minced or chopped meals a day as well as milk. You can also offer the baby healthy snacks such as fruit or toast in between meals.

If your baby is on the move, (he or she may have started crawling), you may need to increase the amount of food you give. Babies have small stomachs and they need energy to grow, so make sure you give them full-fat dairy products.

Babies who are not eating any meat or fish should be offered two servings a day of pulses (such as red lentils, beans or chickpeas), or tofu to make sure they get all the energy and nutrients they need. The vitamin C in fruit and vegetables helps the body absorb iron, so give the baby fruit and vegetables at mealtimes.

## **Foods to avoid**

The following foods should be avoided:

### **Salt**

Babies up to 6 months old should have less than 1g salt a day. From 7 months to a year old they should have a maximum of 1g salt a day.

Don't add salt to any foods you give to babies because their kidneys can't cope with it. The baby foods you'll find on sale aren't allowed to contain salt.

Limit how much you offer foods that are high in salt, such as cheese, bacon and sausages.

Avoid giving the baby any processed foods that aren't made specifically for babies such as pasta sauces and breakfast cereals, because these can be high in salt.

## **Sugar**

Avoid adding sugar to the food or drinks you give the baby. Sugar could encourage a sweet tooth and lead to tooth decay when the baby's first teeth start to come through.

## **Honey**

Babies should not have honey until he or she is a year old. Very occasionally, honey can contain a type of bacteria that can produce toxins in a baby's intestines. This can cause serious illness (infant botulism). After a baby is a year old, the intestine matures and the bacteria can't grow.

## **Nuts**

Whole nuts, including peanuts, should not be given to children under five years in case of choking.

## **Low fat foods**

Low-fat foods, whether yoghurt, fromage frais, cheese or fat spreads are not suitable for babies or children under two. Fat is an important source of calories and some vitamins which they need.

## **Nut allergy**

Peanut allergy appears to be increasing among children, although it's still uncommon. The children who face the highest risk of nut allergy are those with parents or siblings who suffer from certain allergic conditions, such as asthma, eczema, or hayfever.

If the baby is in this higher-risk group, it would be sensible to:

- avoid eating peanuts or peanut products when you're breastfeeding
- avoid giving peanuts, foods containing peanuts (such as peanut butter) or unrefined cold-pressed groundnut (peanut) oil, until the child is at least three years old
- always read ingredients lists carefully and, if you're in doubt, avoid the product

## **Milk and other drinks**

### **Milk**

You will find that as the baby eats more solid foods, the amount of milk he or she wants will start to reduce. Once the baby is eating plenty of solids several times a day, you can drop a milk feed but continue to breastfeed or give 500–600ml (about a pint) of infant formula a day until at least 12 months of age.

Cow's milk is not suitable as a drink until your baby is 12 months old but can be used in cooking.

### **Cows' milk**

Full-fat milk isn't suitable as a drink until the baby is a year old.

Semi-skimmed milk isn't suitable as a drink for children under two. But it can be introduced from two years old, if the child is a good eater and has a varied diet.

Skimmed milk isn't suitable for children under five years old.

### **Water**

This is the best alternative drink to milk, but fully breastfed babies don't need any water until they start eating solid food. For babies under six months old, cooled boiled water can be given.

Some natural mineral waters have mineral contents unsuitable for babies. However, there are other bottled waters that are suitable for infant feeding and you might see the statement 'suitable for infant feeding' on labels. Bottled water is not sterile, so, like tap water, it should be boiled and cooled it before giving it to the baby.

### **Fruit juice**

Fruit juices should not be given to a baby before he or she is six months old. Although fruit juices are a good source of vitamin C they can reduce his or her appetite for milk. Fruit juice also contains sugars, which are present naturally, and these can cause tooth decay. From six months you give very dilute juice (one part juice with ten parts cooled, boiled water) in a feeding cup and at mealtimes only.

### **Squashes, fizzy drinks, flavoured milk and juice drinks**

These are not suitable for young babies. They contain sugars and even if you dilute them they can cause tooth decay, especially when given in a bottle.

### **Baby-led weaning**

Baby led weaning means forgetting baby purées and weaning spoons and simply letting your baby feed himself. Many parents unconsciously choose baby-led weaning, particularly with second or subsequent children. Babies love to copy their older siblings and try to grab food from their plates and are often much happier if they are allowed to feed themselves.

In 2003 the UK government changed its advice in line with that of the World Health Organisation about the recommended age for babies to start solids. It now advises parents to introduce solids into their baby's diet at around six months. At six months old, most babies have strong necks and can sit up if

they are supported. Their hand-eye coordination has developed to the extent that they can reach out and start to grasp food and grip it in their palms.

Although the Department of Health advises parents to start the weaning process at six months with mashed foods, it also recommends including finger foods in your baby's diet as soon as your baby is ready to do so. Some parents feel that their baby is ready straight away.

Parents who have used baby-led weaning recommend using foods that are shaped like a chip, or have a handle, such as cooked broccoli spears. This is because small babies have not yet developed a pincer grip and can only clasp foods in their fists. If you would like to try baby led weaning, offer your baby a selection of nutritious finger foods suitable for your baby's age when you and your family are eating and let him join in. At first he might just play with the food, or he might grab pieces of food with his fist and start to suck on them. Carry on breastfeeding in between mealtimes. As your baby gradually eats more solids, the number of breastfeeds will start to decrease.

## **Practical tips:**

The first two weeks of weaning

Start with a little fruit or vegetable puree with no added salt or sugar, or baby rice. Just a small teaspoonful is enough to start with.

### **Foods to try:**

commercial baby rice

vegetable or fruit puree (potato, carrot, sweet potato, parsnip, apple, pear, banana)

thin porridge (made from cornmeal, sago ,or millet)

### **Foods to avoid:**

wheat based foods, including baby rusks, these are often wheat based and can contain a lot of sugar

eggs

meat

citrus fruits

fish

nuts

salt

fatty foods

unnecessary sugar

chillies or other strong spices

artificial additives

runny honey

## **The next six to eight weeks**

Feeds will still be mainly milk, but now gradually increase the amount of solid food after the milk feed. At the same time move gradually from solids at one feed, to two and three. Begin to add different foods and different tastes, you can start to introduce simple herbs. Mash, sieve or puree a small amount without adding salt or sugar.

### **Foods to try:**

purees using chicken or lentils

a wider variety of fruits and vegetables- can be given with baby gravy and baby cheese sauce

natural yoghurt

cottage cheese - however, cottage cheese and yoghurt should not be given if there is a history of eczema, asthma or hayfever

### **Still avoid:**

wheat based cereals, including bread

eggs

citrus fruits

nuts

chillies and other strong spices

do not use follow on milk to replace breast or formula milk before six months

## **From six to nine months**

You can now move on from puree to food that's just mashed with a fork or minced. Once the baby has grown used to a variety of foods, the solids can be given first and the milk second. With the total milk for the day reduced to approximately 600ml.

Continue with breast or formula milk for the first year. Pasteurised whole cow's milk can be used after six months but only for mixing solid foods. Diluted fruit juice (one part juice to five parts water) or plain water can be introduced as a drink with meals.

### **Foods you can now include:**

wheat based foods- breads, pasta and cereals

citrus fruits

well cooked eggs

In other words, all foods the foods the rest of the family eats providing the consistency is right for the baby.

## **From eight to nine months**

Once the baby, can hold and handle things pieces of peeled apple, peeled carrot, bread crusts and pitta breads give good chewing practice and help the baby to learn to feed themselves. Avoid sweet biscuits and rusks so that the baby doesn't get into the habit of expecting sweet snacks. Continue to give

breast or formula milk, although follow on milk can be given now. As the baby develops the ability to chew, food can be chopped.

Some ideas for healthy and nutritious snacks include:

- toast, pitta or chappati fingers, bread sticks, rice cakes. Choose low-salt or salt-free versions whenever possible
- pieces of chopped fruit or vegetable sticks
- small cubes of cheese.

## **Food safety and hygiene:**

Always wash your hands well before preparing the baby's food.

Check that the baby's hands are clean before feeding.

Keep surfaces clean where food is prepared.

Keep chopping boards thoroughly clean.

Keep cooked and raw meats covered and away from each other and from other foods in the fridge.

Thoroughly wash all bowls and spoons for feeding in hot soapy water.

Don't save and re-use foods that the baby has half eaten. It may result in a tummy upset.

Cooked food should not be reheated more than once.

Cook all food thoroughly and cool it to a lukewarm temperature before giving it to your baby.

Wash and peel fruit and vegetables, such as apples and carrots.

Avoid raw eggs and raw shellfish.

## **Storing and reheating food**

Cool food as quickly as possible (ideally within one to two hours) and place it in the fridge or freezer. Food placed in the fridge should be eaten within two days.

Make sure that frozen food is thoroughly defrosted before reheating. The safest way to do this is in the fridge overnight or using the defrost setting on a microwave.

Reheat food thoroughly so it is piping hot all the way through. Allow it to cool before offering it to the baby.

To cool food quickly, place the food in an airtight container and hold it under a cold running tap, stirring the contents from time to time to allow cooling throughout.