

Baby Nosh!

A short guide to healthy eating for one-to-fives

The meaning of weaning

There comes a time when a baby needs more nourishment than breastmilk or infant formula alone can provide.

Government guidelines strongly encourage mothers to breastfeed their baby exclusively (i.e. offer only breastmilk) for the **first six months** of life.



Weaning is the process of introducing a baby to foods alongside their milk.

There is more to learning to eat than meets the eye – so introduce your baby gradually to a wide range of different tastes and textures.

The types of foods you introduce and when you introduce them is important. This booklet guides you through the stages of weaning.

When is it best to start?

'Babies develop at different rates so start when you think your baby is ready around 6 months (but not before 4 months). Larger babies are usually ready to begin earlier than smaller babies.

Not too late

Delaying weaning beyond six months may mean that your baby misses out on important nutrients such as vitamins and iron.

Not too soon

Let your baby guide you. These signs are a guide your baby is ready:

- they can stay in a sitting position with back support and hold their head steady
- they are already putting toys and other objects in their mouth
- they seem less satisfied with just their milk drinks
- they watch with interest when others are eating.

Pre-term babies

Ask your baby's medical team for guidance. Babies born prematurely usually begin weaning between 5-8 months after they were born depending on how premature they were. See www.BAPM.org for further advice.

How to start weaning!

Don't leave meals until your baby is too hungry or tired to eat, for example offer food during a milk feed. Start slowly – offer a few plastic teaspoons of:



cereal mixed with breastmilk or infant formula

e.g. porridge

or



cooked fruit or vegetables, puréed or mashed or as soft cooked sticks (all cooled before eating)

e.g. potato, yam, parsnip, apple or pear

or



soft fruit, mashed or as finger food

e.g. banana, mango, melon or avocado.

Go at your baby's pace.

Continue to give your baby breastmilk or infant formula. **Never add food to a bottle.**

Let your baby enjoy touching and holding the food.

Make sure your baby is well-supported in a sitting position.

What next?



Gradually introduce more new foods (see pages 11/12).



Slowly increase the amount of solid food offered – try to match the portion size to your baby's appetite.



Gradually increase the number of solid food feeds from **one**, to **two** and then to **three** a day.



Whole milk yogurt and fromage frais can be introduced.



Go for variety – if they are not interested in the food, try again as babies sometimes take their time getting used to different foods. So offer small amounts on different days so they can learn to like that food over time.



Gradually introduce more texture by offering foods with soft lumps and finger foods; if you delay giving lumps or finger foods you may find that your baby refuses to eat lumpy foods as they get older.



Introduce a cup from around six months and offer sips of water with meals.

Using an open cup or a free-flow cup (with no valve) will help your baby learn to sip and is better for your baby's teeth. Encourage your baby to begin taking their milk from a cup so that you discontinue using bottles around their first birthday.

Eat together. Babies copy their parents and other children so you can help them by showing them that you eat healthy foods.

nosh

to Take Care with!

Foods linked to allergy

Foods that can cause allergies such as eggs, wheat, peanuts, nuts, seeds, fish, shellfish, milk and dairy foods (such as yogurt and cheese) and foods containing these ingredients should be introduced one at a time with two or three days in between so you can spot any reaction. If your child has an allergy to egg or there is a family history of food allergy, speak to your healthcare professional before introducing foods from the list above.

Soya-based infant formula and soya products should only be used if advised by your healthcare professional, as babies who are allergic to cow's milk may also have other allergies.

Foods that could cause choking

Large chunks of hard foods (for example, carrots and apples), foods with skin such as sausages, bones and small round foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes can cause choking. Peel and lightly cook hard fruits and vegetables, cut small round foods in half, and take care to remove any stones or pips and all skin and bones before feeding any foods to your baby.

Always stay with your baby when they are eating in case they start to choke.

Consult your health visitor if you have concerns about allergy.

Not For Little Tummies

Foods to Avoid

Sugar. Your baby does not need added sugar. Avoiding sugary snacks and drinks will help prevent tooth decay.

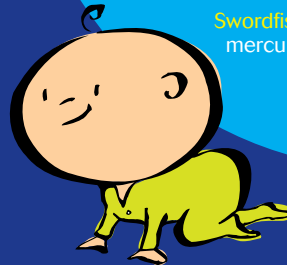
Honey. Do not introduce before 1 year as it sometimes contains a bacteria that can produce toxins in a baby's intestines, leading to infant botulism.

Salt. Do not add salt to your baby's food. Use herbs and spices rather than salt to flavour food.

Whole Nuts. As they may cause choking. You can use nut butters and crushed nuts in food.

Foods intended for adults e.g. low-fat, low-sugar, artificially sweetened foods. Raw or undercooked eggs, fish or meat.

Swordfish, marlin and shark. The amount of mercury in these fish can affect a baby's growing nervous system.



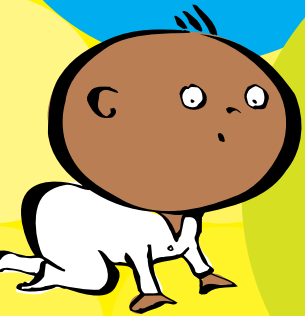
Safe Wosh!

Top tips –
for keeping baby food safe

- Keep all utensils and surfaces really clean.
- Wash your hands and your baby's hands before meals.
- Thoroughly wash and dry all bowls and spoons for feeding.
- Throw away half-eaten food.
- When heating up food, always stir it well.
- Cooked food should not be reheated more than once.
- Check the temperature before offering food to a baby.

Handy hint

- Make batches of mashed or puréed food and freeze in ice-cube trays or containers.
- Defrost cubes as required in the fridge overnight or using defrost settings on the microwave.
- Reheat food thoroughly until hot all the way through.
- But remember to let food cool down before offering it to your baby.



Top tips

weaning – first foods



Allow your baby to feed themselves using their fingers, as soon as they show an interest.

Never leave your baby alone with a bottle or give a bottle to help with sleep as it could cause choking as well as damage teeth.

It can get messy but this is an important part of your baby's development.

Marvelous Mashes

Soft food

Prepare soft food (e.g. banana, mango, melon and avocado) by mashing it with a fork.

Cooked vegetables

Vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, parsnips and broccoli need to be cooked before being mashed.

Peel off any skin, and then rinse and chop the vegetables into small pieces. Steam or boil in a pan until soft (about 10 to 15 minutes). Mash with a fork or potato masher.

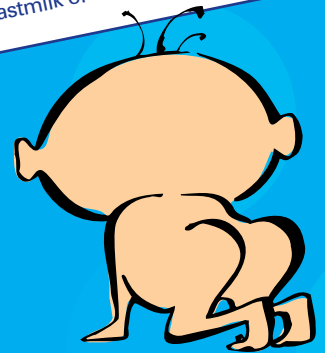
Cooked fruit

Hard fruits such as apples need cooking before being mashed.

Peel, core, rinse and chop the fruit into small pieces. Place in a saucepan with two tablespoons of water and cover with a lid. Cook over a low heat until the fruit is soft (about 5 to 10 minutes) then mash.

Don't add sugar or salt to baby food.

For a smoother consistency add breastmilk or infant formula.



Menu planner

for weaning - my first foods

	Start with	Move on to	Increase to	Increase tastes and textures
Morning	Breastmilk or infant formula	Breastmilk or infant formula Baby cereal*	Breastmilk or infant formula Baby cereal*	Breastmilk or infant formula
Mid-morning	Breastmilk or infant formula	Breastmilk or infant formula	Breastmilk or infant formula	Baby cereal* with mashed banana and toast fingers Breastmilk or infant formula
Lunch	Baby cereal* Breastmilk or infant formula	Fruit or vegetable purée or mash** Breastmilk or infant formula	Soft cooked vegetable mashed or as finger food** Breastmilk or infant formula	Mashed fish (well-cooked, with no bones) Soft cooked sticks of sweet potato and vegetables Soft, peeled fruit mashed with fromage frais + sticks of fruit as finger food** Breastmilk or infant formula
Mid-afternoon	Breastmilk or infant formula	Breastmilk or infant formula	Breastmilk or infant formula	Breastmilk or infant formula
Tea time	Breastmilk or infant formula	Breastmilk or infant formula	Soft, peeled fruit mashed or as finger food** Breastmilk or infant formula	Mashed chicken with mashed rice and vegetables + soft cooked vegetable stick as finger food** Breastmilk or infant formula

* Mixed with breastmilk or infant formula or whole cow's milk. Although cow's milk is not suitable as a drink until one year it may be added to cereal and used in small amounts in cooking.

** See page 3 for suggestions

Important

- Your baby should continue to consume breastmilk or infant formula as required throughout the day.
- Water should be offered with all meals.
- Start by offering foods at a time that suits you both.
- The menu planner is intended as a guide for first foods to try.
- Every baby is an individual and babies develop at different rates. Once your baby has accepted the first simple foods, a greater variety of tastes and textures should be introduced.
- The idea is to gradually increase the amount and variety of food your baby eats until they can eventually eat the same as the rest of the family, but in smaller portions and with no added sugar or salt. Encouraging a variety of foods will ensure they don't miss out on any essential nutrients.
- Once your baby is having 3 meals a day introduce a variety of iron providing foods (see page 22).
- Other foods to try: soft cooked meat, mashed fish (check for bones), pasta, noodles, lentils, toast, pieces of chapatti, mashed hard boiled eggs, and whole milk dairy products such as yogurt or custard.

Weaning

from eight - nine months and over



Begin offering your baby **two courses** at **midday and evening meals** – a savoury course followed by fruit, yogurt or a milk pudding such as custard.



Your baby will be having a mixture of **soft finger foods, mashed** and **chopped** foods.



Slowly introduce a wider range of foods from all food groups listed below.

Each day try to give your baby a variety of foods including:

Fruit and vegetables

Starchy foods like bread, rice, pasta and potatoes

Meat, fish (well-cooked, no bones), well-cooked eggs, pulses (peas, beans or lentils e.g. dahl)

Whole milk and dairy products. Whole milk can be used in cooking or mixed in small amounts with foods, however should not be given as a main drink until your baby is one year old.

Continue to offer breastmilk or infant formula throughout the day.

Finger Foods



Let your baby feed themselves with their fingers. This helps them get familiar with different types of food.



As a guide, the best finger foods are those which can be cut into pieces big enough for your baby to hold in their fist sticking out at the top.



Pieces about the size of your own finger work well.

Some finger foods to try:

- toast
- cooked green beans
- cooked carrots, yam, sweet potato
- sticks or cubes of hard cheese
- peeled ripe banana
- peeled ripe pear
- cooked pasta shapes
- bread sticks

Note: Begin offering hard finger foods such as raw carrot or apple slices from about 9 months.

Menu planner

for weaning - my first family meals

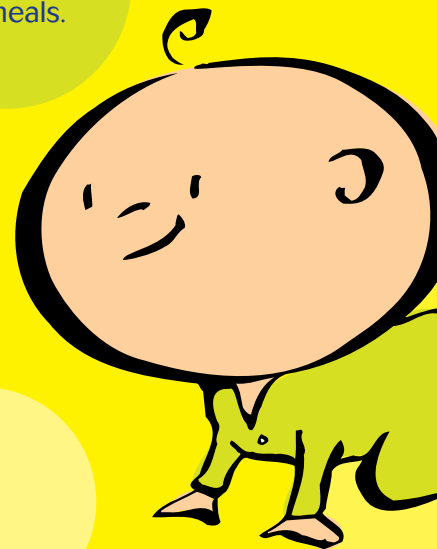
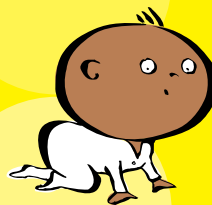
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Morning	Porridge or unsweetened cereal* Pieces of ripe peeled pear (finger food) Breastmilk or infant formula	Wholewheat biscuit cereal* Pieces of melon (finger food) Breastmilk or infant formula	Mashed banana and toast fingers (finger food) Breastmilk or infant formula
Lunch	Baked beans (reduced salt and sugar) Toast fingers (finger food) Plain fromage frais with stewed apple Breastmilk or infant formula	Scrambled egg (well-cooked) with toast, chapatti or pitta bread Cucumber sticks (finger food) Soft, ripe peeled peach (finger food) Breastmilk or infant formula	Macaroni cheese Green beans (finger food) Semolina with strawberries Breastmilk or infant formula
Tea	Fish, broccoli and mashed potato Cooked carrot sticks (finger food) Chopped grapes (finger food)	Minced lamb and vegetable casserole with rice Mixed berries and plain yogurt	Lentil and vegetable bake Red pepper slices (finger food) Small cup of orange juice (diluted)
Evening	Breastmilk or infant formula	Breastmilk or infant formula	Breastmilk or infant formula

* Mixed with either breastmilk, whole cow's milk or infant formula

Some babies will eat more than others and so the menu planner is intended as a guide for food choice and does not give portion sizes.

Breastmilk or infant formula feeds should be reduced gradually over time as baby starts eating more foods.

Water should be offered with all meals.



Feeding a one-year-old



1 Your baby can join in with the family by eating three meals a day by their first birthday.

2 Try and make their diet as varied as possible.

3 Whole milk can now be introduced as a main drink. Milk should be given in a cup.

Each day, try and give your child:

- **Starchy foods** – like potatoes, pasta, rice, bread - at each meal and as some snacks
- **A variety of protein** – 2 servings of meat, fish or alternative protein sources (such as beans and lentils) or 2 or 3 servings of alternative protein sources for vegetarian or vegan children
- **Fruit and vegetables** – encourage your child to try lots of different fruits and veg. Why not add grated apple, banana or raisins to breakfast cereal or carrots or red pepper to pasta sauces
- **About 3 servings of milk and dairy a day** as a drink, in milk-based dishes or as cheese, yogurt or fromage frais.

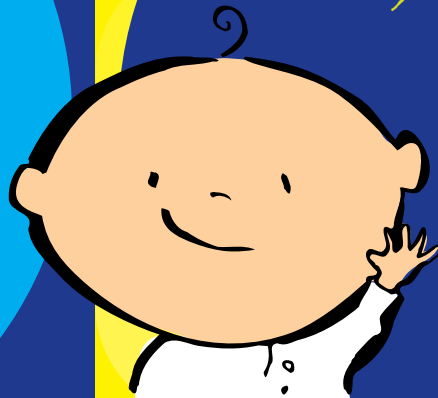
Snack Attack

Babies have small tummies and so smaller, more frequent meals and healthy snacks will suit them better.



Some snack ideas to try:

- Canned fruit in fruit juice
- Soft, peeled fresh fruit
- Plain yogurt
- Sticks or cubes of hard cheese
- Pitta or chapatti fingers
- Unsalted rice cakes
- Toasted bagel pieces
- Toast fingers with cheese spread



Milky matters

'Follow-on' formula can be introduced only after 6 months **but it is not necessary to move your baby on to these milks.**

If your baby is six months or older, is breastfed and/or drinking less than 500mls of formula milk each day give them vitamin drops containing vitamins A, C and D. Your GP or health visitor can advise you on amounts. Vitamin drops are available under the Healthy Start scheme.

Rice drinks shouldn't be given until 5 years, other alternatives can be served after 1 year.

Milk-based puddings like yogurt or rice pudding are good milky options.

Cow's milk can be given as a drink after 1 year.

Only breastmilk or formula milk should be given as a main drink for under-ones. As babies start to eat more solid food they will want less milk feeds so you can drop them gradually.

Your questions answered

Should I give my baby fruit drinks, squash or fruit juice?

Fruit juices are not necessary as breastmilk and formula milks contain vitamin C. It is best for your baby to learn to like water as a drink. If you give fruit juice dilute it well, restrict it to mealtimes and only give it in an open cup or a free-flow cup (with no valve), never a bottle, to prevent damage to the teeth.

The best drinks to give between meals are breastmilk or infant formula, or water*.

* All water should be boiled and then cooled for babies under six months. Bottled water is not sterile and may contain too much sodium (salt).

When should I switch my baby from a bottle to a cup?

Introduce an open cup or a free-flow cup (with no valve) when your baby is six months old. Try and finish with the bottle by his or her first birthday.

Should I give my baby ready-made baby food?

Jars of ready-made baby food are convenient, but portion sizes are often too big and much of it has the same texture. Homemade baby food is usually cheaper and made from simple ingredients. If you do buy ready-made food, look at the ingredients label to check that it does not contain added sugar or salt. Don't reuse food that your child has half-eaten.

How can I make sure my baby gets enough iron?

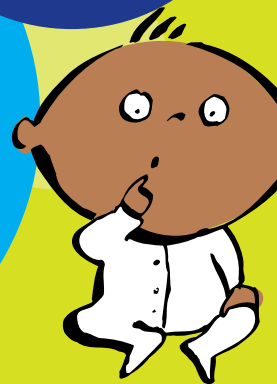
Babies are born with a store of iron that will last about six months. After that they need to get iron from their food. Give your baby some red meat e.g. beef, some dark poultry meat such as thigh or leg meat, some eggs and pulses e.g. lentils. Giving these foods alongside vitamin C containing foods like tomatoes and green vegetables will help them make best use of the iron.

Can I give my baby low-fat foods?

No, save low-fat foods for later in life. Babies need fat to help them grow and develop. For example, choose yogurts made from whole milk.

Is it OK to give my baby goats' or sheep's milk?

No, these are not suitable drinks for babies under one year because they don't contain the nutrients that babies need.



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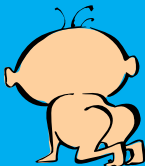
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For details on additional information sources please contact The Dairy Council

For a **FREE** copy of **Tiny Tums!**
A guide to healthy eating for the one to fives,
contact The Dairy Council at info@dairy council.org.uk



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