

MEALTIMES BECOME MORE IMPORTANT

Stage 2 Lumpier Textures and Starting Finger Foods

Although breast milk or infant formula remains the most important source of food up to your baby reaching one year old, your baby should take less as you increase the amount of solid food. Once solids have been accepted, it is important that you vary the menus as much as possible to ensure a good mixed diet, and to avoid the problems of fussy eating habits as your baby/child grows up.

Wherever possible, use the same foods which you are preparing for the rest of your family. This ensures that feeding your baby will be cheaper, easier and will give variety to the diet. Fatty, highly seasoned foods, added sugar and salt, are still unsuitable for baby at this stage.

At about the ages of 7 and 8 months your baby will develop the ability to chew, even if teeth haven't come through yet. Now is the time to try offering foods with small soft lumps. Chewing is important to develop the muscles ready for speech.

Family foods can be mashed or blended to a soft lump consistency. Vegetables need to be cooked until soft and meat will still need to be coarsely pureed.

When introducing coarser foods, it is a good idea to use a food that is already enjoyed. Try mixing a little of the coarser food into the normal pureed food your baby already enjoys. Gradually you will be able to increase the lumpy food and cut out the puree.

You can still cook and freeze baby's meals for convenience - see from page 5 onwards.

FEEDING THEMSELVES

Finger foods are usually accepted around 6-7 months, if solids have been introduced at 4 months (17 weeks). They are usually accepted at around 7-8 months if solids have been introduced at 6 months (26 weeks). Finger foods are important to help with chewing and teething. Let your baby try using a spoon while you are feeding so that feeding skills begin to develop.

Suitable foods are:-

Fingers of bread or toast, rice cakes, savoury biscuits, breadsticks, chapatti
soft, peeled, raw fruits such as banana, pear, melon, peach, mango,
sticks of vegetables such as cooked carrots and celery and cooked
green vegetables e.g. green beans

Avoid giving sticky biscuits and rusks between meals. They will spoil your baby's appetite, are not good for your babies teeth and are messy.

Tinned and bottled jar baby foods, if used, should be second stage (often labelled 6-7 months onwards).

REMEMBER

NEVER LEAVE BABIES ALONE WHILE THEY ARE TRYING HARD FOODS OR FEEDING THEMSELVES.

DRINKS

Tap water no longer needs to be boiled for babies over 6 months (26 weeks) of age. From 6 months (26 weeks) babies should be encouraged to drink from a feeding beaker. Use one with a spout and two firm handles and introduce to your baby gradually.

Drinks sold for children usually contain fewer additives than adult drinks but may contain high concentrations of sugars which could cause dental problems and are therefore best avoided.

Unsweetened fruit juice is a good idea and should be diluted;
e.g. 1:6 - 1 part juice : 6 parts water

- give sparingly
- and only at mealtimes

All herbal drinks should be avoided because of their high sugar content. See the section on iron for advice on tea and coffee (page 3).

VITAMIN DROPS

Vitamin drops should be given to your baby from 6 months (26 weeks) of age if:-

- he/she is breastfed
- he/she is bottle fed if the amount of formula taken is less than 500mls (17 fl.oz) per day

Your health visitor can give you more information on the use of vitamin drops.

MILK

Infant formula or breast milk is best used for drinks until your baby is 1 year old. Cow's milk can be used in **cooking** after 4 months (17 weeks) of age e.g. custard, sauces and to **mix cereals** from 6 months (26 weeks) of age. After 1 year, full cream cow's milk can be used as the sole source of milk. Your child should be taking 1 pint in total. This includes puddings and yogurts as well as drinks. More than this may reduce his/her appetite for foods.

EGGS

Eggs can be introduced into your baby's diet from 6 months (26 weeks) of age onwards. All eggs should be well cooked until the white and yolk are solid for babies until 1 year of age. This is due to the risk of salmonella food poisoning. Dishes which contain raw, uncooked or partially cooked egg should be avoided until 1 year of age. Dishes containing homemade mayonnaise should not be introduced before 12 months.

(Note: It is always safer to cook eggs until solid)

CHEESE

Cheese can be introduced from 6 months (26 weeks). Start with pureed cottage cheese and move onto grated or cubed cheddar later. It can be used in cooking or as a finger food.

NUTS

Whole nuts and seeds should not be given to children under 5 years of age because of the risk of choking. Finely ground nuts (i.e. smooth peanut or other nut butters) may be taken from 6 months (26 weeks) onwards. However, if your baby has any known allergies or there is a family history of allergies such as asthma, eczema, rhinitis or hayfever, then all nuts should be avoided until 3 years of age. Nuts need not be introduced if you are worried.

GLUTEN (wheat, rye, barley, oats)

Gluten containing foods e.g. rusks, bread, wholegrain cereals can be introduced after 6 months (26 weeks) of age.

SALT

At this stage foods can be cooked with a little salt if part of the family's cooking. It is best for the whole family to avoid salt in cooking. Salt should not be added at the table and salty foods, e.g. stock cubes, yeast extract, should only be added to food in small and weak amounts.

IRON : This is an important mineral to consider at this age.

During the first few months of your baby's life either breast milk or infant formula provides all the nourishment needed.

Your baby was born with his/her own iron store, but by the age of 6 months (26 weeks) this store has started to decrease. A variety of foods then need to be given to provide a balanced range of nutrients, particularly iron.

Iron is essential for healthy blood and normal growth and development. Babies grow very quickly at this age and insufficient iron may slow down these important processes, resulting in anaemia.

Iron and Iron Absorption

The sort of iron found in meat, fish and poultry (known as haem iron) is better absorbed than that found in other foods such as fruits, vegetables and cereals. So foods containing haem iron, particularly red meats, are the best sources of iron.

Foods rich in Vitamin C increase the amount of iron absorbed. Vitamin C is found in fresh fruits, vegetables and fruit juices.

Unsweetened dilute orange juice should be taken with meals, especially if the diet is meat free. Fruit juice should be diluted 1 part fruit juice to 6 parts water.

Some high fibre foods, like unprocessed bran, contain substances which reduce iron absorption, therefore high fibre cereals should only be given in small quantities. However, foods such as fine grain wholemeal bread are suitable.

Tea is not a suitable drink for babies as it binds iron in the diet. Coffee also reduces iron absorption and is best avoided.

The best sources of Iron in the diet are:

- Meat** All red meats and offal (e.g. liver, kidney, tongue).
- Fish** Especially tinned salmon, sardines and pilchards
(be careful of bones in fish).
- Eggs** These may be given from 6 months of age and cooked
until both yolk and white are firm.

Other good sources of iron are:

Pulses Peas, beans, lentils, dhals.

Vegetables Especially dark green leafy vegetables
e.g. spinach, peas, green beans, cabbage, and tomato purée

Breakfast Cereals Many breakfast cereals are fortified with iron -
check the labels on the cereal packet.

Commercial Foods Look out for iron fortified foods, for example fromage frais and yogurts made with follow on milk, iron fortified spaghetti shapes
Soft grain breads are also fortified with vitamins and iron

Try to include a variety of foods in your baby's diet. As he/she begins to take more solid foods aim to include 2 servings of the best sources of iron each day, along with 1 or 2 servings of other good sources of iron.

Follow on infant formulas are enriched with iron and may be useful in certain situations where iron intake may be low, for example, fussy eaters and in children who are vegetarian, or who eat little meat. They should not be used for babies under 6 months (26 weeks) of age.

SUGGESTED PLAN FOR 2ND STAGE OF WEANING**Early Morning**

Breast or formula milk

Breakfast Time

Baby rice or breakfast cereal (e.g. First Tastes, Weetabix, Ready Brek, porridge) - with puréed fruits (if required) - no sugar should be added to these

Breast or formula milk

Dinner Time

Aim to give savoury foods at this meal

Minced/mashed meat or fish with minced/mashed vegetables and pureed potato or rice

Puréed fruit can be offered if your baby is still hungry

Water or diluted pure unsweetened fruit juice to drink

Tea Time

Home prepared savoury dish (see recipe ideas) or commercial jar food

Minced/mashed fruit, yogurt, fromage frais

Breast or formula milk

Late Evening

Breast or formula feed

Remember to offer water or diluted unsweetened fruit juices between meals from a cup.
Encourage your baby to feed him/herself by offering finger foods.

RECIPES FOR 6 MONTH OLD BABIES

MAIN COURSE **all recipes 1-2 helpings**
(depending on baby's appetite)

Potato Cheese

1 medium potato
 Milk
 1 dessertspoon cottage cheese

Method

Boil the potato until soft, mash it with a little warmed milk, stir in the cottage cheese

Potato and Carrot Puree

1 medium carrot
 1 small potato
 Milk

Method

Scrape and dice the carrot, peel and slice the potato. Put them in small pan with enough milk just to cover - about 150ml (¼ pint). Simmer gently until all the liquid has boiled away - 15 minutes - by which time the vegetables will be soft enough to mash with a fork.

Tomato Cheese

1 tomato
 Cottage cheese
 Parsley

Method

Skin and de-seed the tomato, cut into pieces, drop into a blender with a dessertspoon of cottage cheese and a sprig of parsley. Blend. Other vegetables can be used instead of tomato.

Yogurt Savoury

3 tbsp natural yogurt
 2-3 tbsp cooked unsalted vegetables

Method

Puree the cooked vegetables and mix into the yogurt. Serve warm or cooled.

Tomato Yogurt Smoothie

2 tomatoes
 3 tbsp milk
 2 tbsp natural yogurt

Method

Place tomatoes in boiling water for 30 seconds.
 Peel, sieve and discard seeds, stir in milk and warm the tomato mixture. Stir in yogurt just before serving.

Lentil Puree

2 tbsp red lentils
 8 tbsp milk

Method

Wash lentils. Place in pan with milk. Bring to the boil and simmer until soft (20-30 minutes). Cool, sieve and serve.

Savoury Liver

1oz (30g) liver
 1 medium potato
 2 tbsp milk

Method

Cut the liver into thin slices and grill until brown throughout. Prepare potato by boiling and mashing finely with a little milk. Mix liver and potato mixture and mash or liquidise.

Chicken may be used in place of liver. This produces a recipe with a milder flavour which may be preferred by some babies.

Meat Savoury

Slice lean meat (cooked)
 Small potato
 1 tomato
 1 carrot

Method

Dice meat, chop potato and tomato and grate carrot. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ pint of water to ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to boil and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Puree or liquidise.

Fish Patty

1 tbsp boiling water
 2 tbsp brown breadcrumbs
 1 tbsp mild Cheddar, grated
 2 tbsp fish (cooked and flaked)

Method

Mix together all the ingredients, puree. Turn the mixture into a heatproof dish. Grill until completely heated, 10-15 minutes.

Any filleted white fish that the rest of the family are eating can be used for this recipe. As your baby gets older, drained and flaked tuna fish could be used.

Fish Soup

1 medium carrot
 Small potato
 A little chopped onion
 1 small piece of white fish - coley, cod or haddock
 150ml ($\frac{1}{4}$ pint) milk
 Parsley or chives

Method

Prepare vegetables and cut into small cubes. Place in a saucepan with finely chopped onion. Add fish and cover with milk. Simmer gently for about 30 minutes.

Remove fish and leave vegetables simmering. Skin and flake the fish, ensure all bones are removed. When vegetables are cooked add them with the cooking liquid and fish to the blender. Add a little parsley or chives if desired. Puree.

DESSERTS**Ripe Peach**

Skin a ripe peach, remove stone and put into the blender with a teaspoon of yogurt, or serve on its own.

Crisp Apple

Wash, but do not peel, a crisp apple, then put chunks into the blender with a little cottage cheese and a dash of lemon juice and blend.

Yogurt Dessert

½ ripe banana (mashed)
or 2 tbsp stewed apple
or 2 tbsp stewed pear
or 4 strawberries (mashed)
3 tbsp natural unsweetened yogurt

Method

Mix fruit with yogurt

Yummy Banana

Banana
1 tbsp natural yogurt
1 tbsp cottage cheese

Method

Liquidise all the ingredients together.

SUGGESTED MEAL PLAN FOR 7-8 MONTH OLD BABY**Breakfast**

Cereal - fine porridge **or** Weetabix **or** Readybrek with milk

or

Egg (boiled, poached or scrambled) (NB. egg must be cooked until yolk is hard)

With a finger of wholemeal toast

Cup of milk

Dinner

Mince or chopped meat or fish or pulses

Mashed or chopped vegetables

Mashed or chopped potatoes or rice or pasta or chapatti

Chopped soft fresh or stewed fruit or yogurt or milk pudding or custard

Cup of diluted pure unsweetened fruit juice or water

Tea

Savoury dish:- fish dish, egg dish, cheese dish (grated mild cheese or cottage cheese) or vegetable dish

Fingers of bread or chapatti

Chopped soft fresh fruit

Water or milk (breast or bottle feed)

Bedtime

Breast or bottle feed

RECIPES FOR 7-8 MONTH OLD BABIES

Rusks

½" (1-2cm) thick slices wholemeal or white bread
1 egg

Dip bread into beaten egg, coating the bread well. Place on a baking tray and bake in oven for 15-30 minutes or grill both sides until brown. Cut into fingers, store in airtight tin to keep crisp. The rusks will keep for up to ten days. NB Oven baked rusks are harder and keep better.

Tuna Mash 1-2 helpings

3 tbsp tinned tuna
2 medium potatoes
A little grated onion
Wholemeal breadcrumbs
Milk

Wash and thinly slice the potatoes into a small pan. Cover with milk, add a little grated onion. Bring to the boil, lower the heat and cook gently until the potatoes are soft and the milk almost absorbed. Mash the potatoes with a fork and stir in the tuna, check for oddments of skin and bone. Turn into a small greased casserole, sprinkle with a few wholemeal breadcrumbs, brown under a hot grill.

Fish Pie 1-2 helpings

Piece of fish
1 large cup of milk
2 medium potatoes
Wholemeal breadcrumbs
Pinch of dried or fresh mint or parsley

Put the milk into a small pan, add herbs, and bring to the boil. Lower the heat, slice the potatoes thinly, and add the fish and potatoes to the milk. After 3 or 4 minutes the fish will be cooked. Take it out - leaving the potato cooking. Skin the fish, double check for bones and flake it into a small greased casserole. When the potato is cooked, mash it with a fork in the fishy milk and put it on top of the fish in the casserole, sprinkle wholemeal breadcrumbs over the top, dot with margarine or butter and brown under a hot grill for about 5 minutes.

Mince Casserole 2-3 helpings

100g (4oz) minced beef or minced meat
1 small onion
Oil
2 tomatoes
Basil - dried or fresh
Thyme or parsley
2 tbsp stock or water

Chop the onion and cook gently in a little oil heated in a pan. Transfer the onion to a casserole dish. Add the minced meat mixed up with the finely chopped tomatoes. Season with a little dried basil (fresh is even nicer) and a little thyme or parsley. Add the stock or water, cover and bake in a moderate oven 180°C, 350° F, Gas Mark 4 for about 1 hour. Serve with mashed potato or chopped spaghetti.

Macaroni Cheese

Cook pasta shapes or macaroni until tender. Chop if necessary before coating with a cheesy sauce.

FREEZING BABY FOODS

If you have a freezer you may find it convenient to prepare a quantity of pureed baby meals and then freeze them in small portions.

Useful containers for freezing baby foods are:-

1. Ice cube trays. (Freeze food in trays then turn out into plastic bags for storage).
2. Plastic egg trays.
3. Small yogurt/cheese pots or margarine tubs.

Hygiene is very important, so follow these rules:-

- i) Freeze only fresh foods in perfect condition.
- ii) Use only very clean equipment for preparation and storage.
- iii) Handle food as little as possible and always keep it clean.
- iv) Cool cooked foods quickly and freeze immediately.
- v) Label every item and include the date frozen. Most foods have a storage life of about 3 months.

USING FROZEN FOODS FOR YOUR BABY

1. Take the food out of the freezer and leave to thaw thoroughly in the fridge (unless the label states otherwise).
2. Put the food into a small container or cup and stand in a pan of boiling water, until the food reaches boiling temperature.
3. Stir the food occasionally, checking that it is thoroughly heated.
4. Allow to cool sufficient to give to baby.
5. **Never** re-freeze foods.
6. Microwaves can be used for heating a baby's food, but they do leave cold spots, so food should be left to stand for 1-2 minutes after heating to ensure even heat distribution. Microwaved food should be checked before giving it to a baby to make sure the temperature is not too hot.

CARE SHOULD ALWAYS BE TAKEN TO ALLOW THE FOOD TO COOL SUFFICIENTLY BEFORE GIVING TO YOUR BABY.

FOODS UNSUITABLE FOR FREEZING

Certain foods do not freeze well. These include:-

Bananas
Custards (these tend to separate)
Eggs - if raw, in shells, hard boiled or poached
Tomatoes - unless pureed or in a cooked dish

In conclusion:

Practical tips to note at this age:

- Food should become lumpier at this stage progressing from pureed through minced/mashed to finely chopped.
- Increase the variety of foods offered, e.g. include chicken, fish, eggs, cereals and pulses (e.g. peas, beans, lentils) and a wider variety of fruit and vegetables.
- Begin to give “finger foods”.
- Use family foods but do not add sugar, honey or spices.
- Offer water or diluted fruit juice (1 part unsweetened fruit juice to 6 parts water) to drink in a beaker or cup.
- Remember vitamin drops (see advice at beginning of leaflet).