

Feeding Baby Solid Foods



Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
Office régional de la santé de Winnipeg
Caring for Health À l'écoute de notre santé



Healthy Child
Manitoba



Putting children and families first

Remember...

Parents are responsible for what their child is given to eat. The child will choose how much, and even whether he eats.

Help your baby be successful with eating:

- ✦ Choose foods that suit your baby's abilities and age.
- ✦ Feed your baby whenever he shows signs that he is hungry.
- ✦ Make sure baby is sitting up during meal times – in a highchair is best.
- ✦ Stay and socialize with your baby when she is eating. Talk quietly and encourage her while she eats. Try not to overwhelm her with attention.
- ✦ Try to include your baby in the family mealtime routine. Feed him while other family members are eating.

Let your baby take the lead with eating:

- ✦ Let your baby open his mouth before you feed him.
- ✦ Let your baby touch her food - in the dish or on the spoon. Allow her to feed herself with her fingers as soon as she shows interest.
- ✦ Feed your baby at his pace. Do not try to get him to go faster or slower than he wants to.
- ✦ Stop feeding when your baby shows that she has had enough. Do not force your baby to finish her food. A baby will eat when she is hungry and stop when she is full.
- ✦ Be patient when offering new foods.
- ✦ Have fun!

NOTE: You might notice a change in the colour and consistency of your baby's bowel movements with each new food that baby tries. This is normal.

What you need to know before starting your baby on solid foods

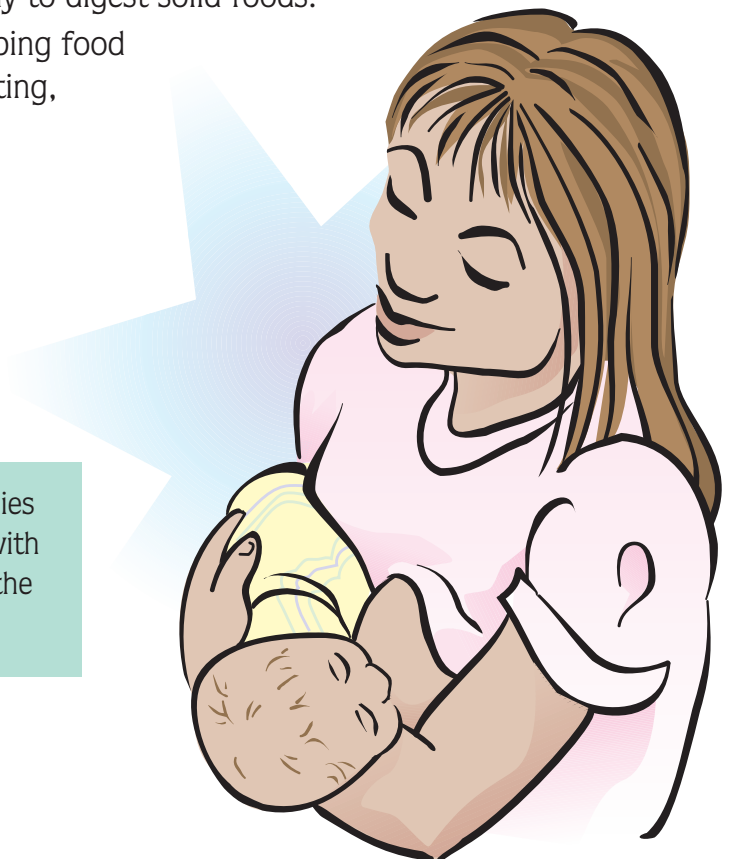
There is no need to rush solid foods. For the first six months after birth, breast milk or infant formula with iron is all your baby needs.

Giving baby solid foods too early can cause problems because:

- Your baby may drink less breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula.
- Your baby's stomach may not be ready to digest solid foods.
- It may increase the chances of developing food allergies or cause stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhea, rash or breathing problems.
- Your baby may have a difficult time swallowing solid foods.

Studies show that solids will not help your baby sleep through the night!

NOTE: If your family has a history of allergies or your baby was born prematurely, speak with your health care provider for guidelines on the introduction of solids.



These signs indicate your baby is ready for solid foods...

Your baby:

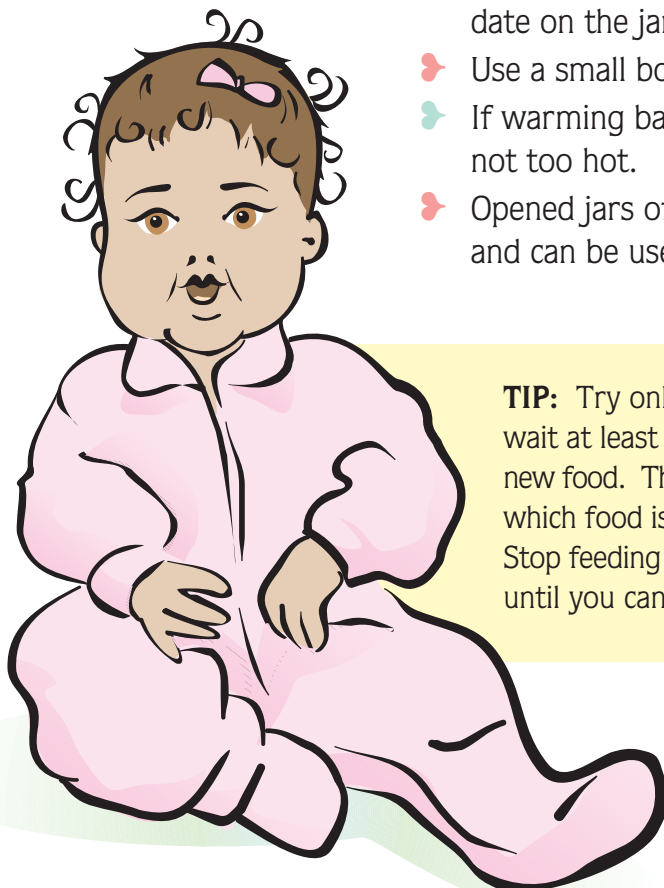
- is six months old
- can sit up with very little help
- can hold his head up
- opens her mouth when food is offered
- is able to take food from a spoon
- can turn his head to refuse food

Some possible signs of an allergic reaction are:

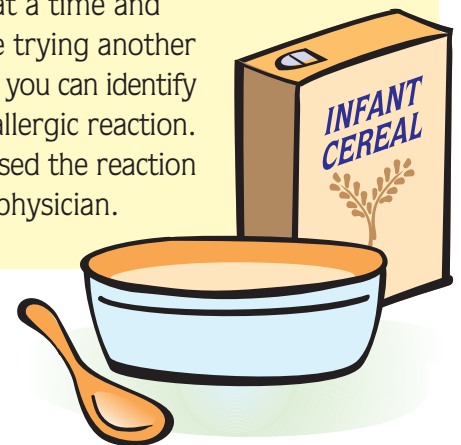
- rash
- diarrhea
- breathing problems
- vomiting
- stomach pain

Feeding Tips

- If using commercially prepared baby food, check the expiry date on the jar or package and do not use past this date.
- Use a small bowl or plate; do not feed baby from the jar.
- If warming baby food, stir and test it to make sure it is not too hot.
- Opened jars of baby food should be stored in the fridge and can be used for up to three days.



TIP: Try only one new food at a time and wait at least three days before trying another new food. This is to make sure you can identify which food is the cause of an allergic reaction. Stop feeding the food that caused the reaction until you can see your family physician.



Vitamin & Mineral Supplements

Iron

Iron is important for healthy red blood cells and for brain development. Most breastfed babies get enough iron from breastmilk until they reach six months of age. For non-breastfed infants, iron-fortified infant formula is recommended from birth.

Iron-rich foods such as infant cereals, chicken, pork, beef, wild meat, egg yolks and legumes should be introduced around age six months for breastfed and formula fed babies.

NOTE: Low-birthweight babies or premature infants have special iron needs. Talk to your health care provider for more information.

Fluoride

Fluoride helps children develop strong teeth. Do not give fluoride supplements to your baby before six months of age — it can harm your baby's developing teeth. At six months of age, your baby may need fluoride drops if your water supply does not contain fluoride. (Some communities do not put fluoride in the water.)

Check with your local public health office or dentist to see if the water in your community is fluoridated. Then, talk to your health care provider for more information.

Grain Products

Kinds of cereal to feed babies:

- Choose infant cereal, not adult cereal. Infant cereal has more iron than adult cereal.
- Avoid infant cereal with added fruits, honey or yogurt.
- Start with single-grain, iron-fortified infant rice cereal. Then, offer barley or oatmeal, and then mixed grain cereal.

Making and feeding infant cereal:

- Read the label on the cereal box and follow directions for mixing.
- At first, mix dry cereal with liquid to make it runny like thick soup. As your baby learns to manage cereal, gradually reduce the amount of liquid to make the cereal thicker.
- Feeding cereal from a spoon helps baby learn to eat.
- Your baby does not need sugar, sweeteners or salt added to the cereal.
- Offer cereal in the morning at first. After a few days, offer a second cereal meal.
- You can start with one to two tablespoons (15-30 ml) of dry cereal and gradually increase according to baby's appetite. Let baby decide how much to eat.
- Throw out any cereal that baby does not eat.

Grain Products

Vegetables

Feeding vegetables to baby:

- Try one new vegetable at a time. Offer it early in the day.
- Do not mix vegetables together. Let baby learn the taste of each vegetable.
- Wait at least three days before trying a new vegetable.
- Examples of vegetables to try include: sweet potatoes, potatoes, squash, peas, green and yellow beans, carrots.
- You can use fresh, frozen or canned vegetables. Rinse the canned vegetables first to remove some of the salt or use unsalted products.

TIP: It's easy to make food for your baby. See page 13 of this booklet for instructions.



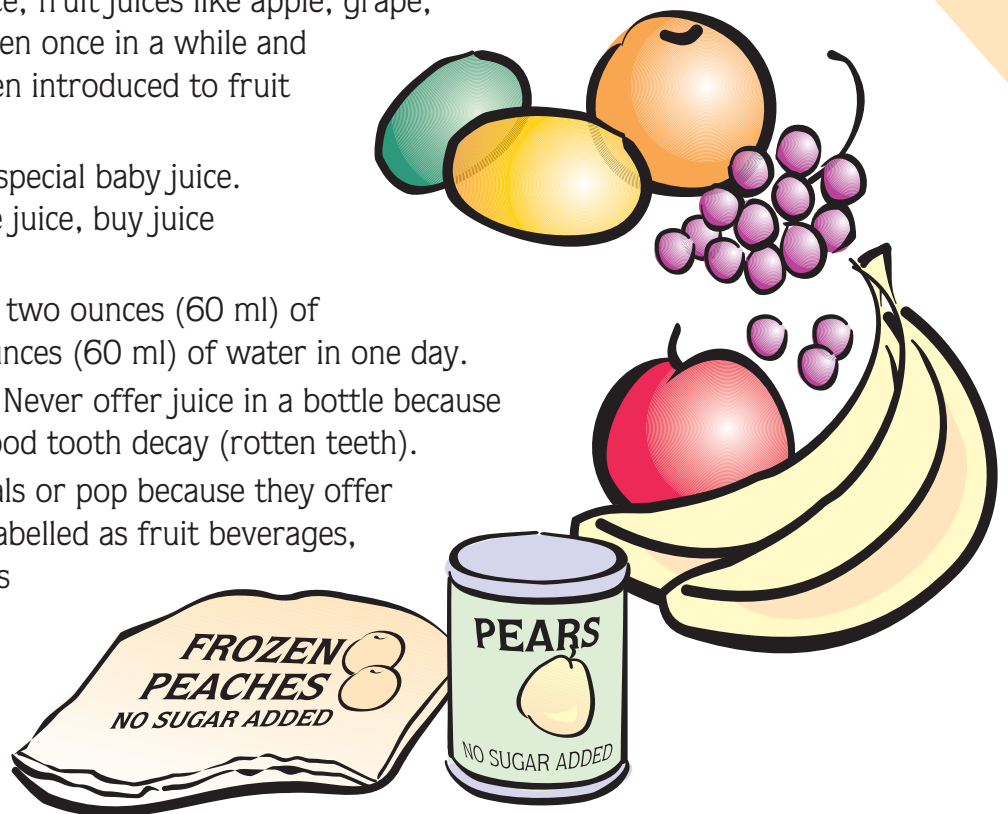
Fruit

Feeding fruit to baby:

- Try one fruit at a time.
- Use soft, ripe fresh fruit, unsweetened or canned fruit in its own juice (not in syrup). Use a fork to mash fruit before feeding it to your baby (see the Recipe and Feeding Guide on page 14 of this booklet).
- Store-bought "baby desserts" are high in sugar – your baby does not need them.
- Start with a small amount the first day and gradually increase according to your baby's hunger.

Fruit juice:

- Babies get all the fluid they need from breast milk or infant formula with iron. They do not need juice. If you think your baby is thirsty, offer water.
- If you choose to give juice, fruit juices like apple, grape, prune or pear can be given once in a while and only if your child has been introduced to fruit already.
- You do not need to buy special baby juice. If you feel you must give juice, buy juice with no added sugar.
- Give your baby less than two ounces (60 ml) of juice diluted with two ounces (60 ml) of water in one day.
- Offer it in a plastic cup. Never offer juice in a bottle because it can cause early childhood tooth decay (rotten teeth).
- Avoid fruit drinks, crystals or pop because they offer no nutrition. Products labelled as fruit beverages, fruit drinks, fruit crystals or fruit punches are NOT fruit juices.

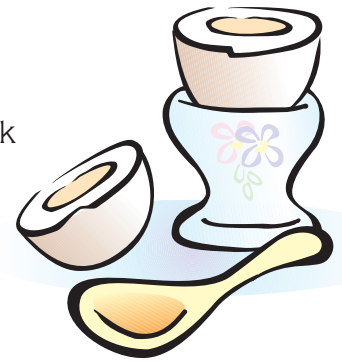


Meat & Alternatives

Feeding protein-rich foods to your baby:

- Add one new protein-rich food at a time.
- Try beef, pork, veal, chicken, turkey, fish, egg yolk, tofu or legumes (peas, beans, lentils).
- Processed meats such as ham, bacon, wieners, salami, bologna or sausages are not good choices because they are high in salt.

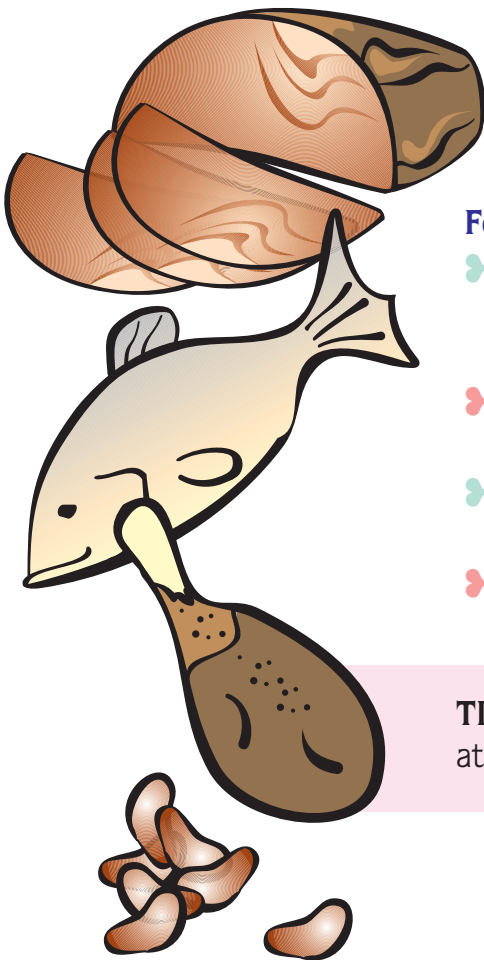
NOTE: Vegetarian diets are sometimes low in fat and energy, and are often high in fibre. Talk to a registered dietitian for help in planning your baby's vegetarian diet.



Feeding your baby eggs:

- Start with just the egg yolk. Hard boil the whole egg, separate the yolk from the white, and then mash the yolk with a fork.
- Wait until after 12 months of age to give your baby egg whites or whole eggs (the yolk and whites) due to the possibility of allergies.
- Once your baby can eat whole eggs, you can use them in many ways. Try mashed hard-boiled eggs, scrambled eggs or poached eggs.
- Do not feed your baby foods that contain raw eggs.

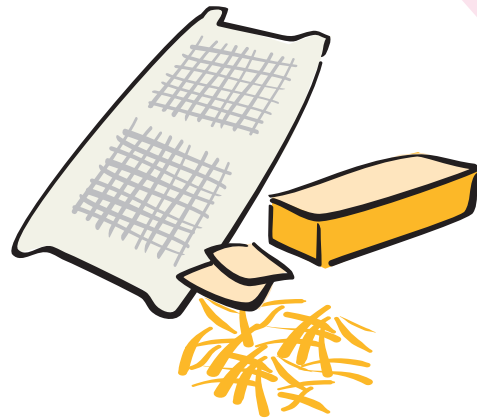
TIP: Remember to introduce only one new food at a time and wait at least three days before trying another new food.



Milk Products

Feeding milk products to your baby:

- Offer full fat, plain yogurt.
- Start with soft cheese like cottage cheese or ricotta.
- Slowly add other types of cheese like cheddar or mozzarella. They can be grated or cut into thin slices.
- Once your baby is between nine months and one year old, whole homogenized cow's milk can be offered only if baby is eating sources of iron from foods such as iron-fortified infant cereals, chicken, pork, beef, wild meat, egg yolks and legumes.
- Unpasteurized cow's milk is not safe for babies.
- Wait until your child is at least two years old to give 2 % or any other low-fat milk.



NOTE: Soy beverage, rice beverage or other vegetarian drinks should not replace breast milk, formula or whole milk in the first two years because they may not contain enough protein, calories, minerals and vitamins to help your baby grow.

Family Foods

Feeding baby is easy. Once a baby is between seven to eight months old it is time to leave the smooth or puréed foods behind and gradually move to regular family foods. Babies this age accept and welcome the challenge of learning to eat.

Some tips:

- If you leave the introduction of lumpier foods too late, it will be difficult to get your baby to accept these foods later on.
- Start by slowly introducing more textured foods into their diet, while gradually giving up smooth foods.
- Seat your baby in a highchair at the family table. You may offer small bits of what you are eating starting at about seven to eight months of age. This is an important step in learning to eat.
- Babies gag or spit out food when learning to eat. This is normal.
- Let baby make a mess while learning to eat with his or her fingers. This increases confidence and willingness to try new things.
- Learning to eat is a gradual process and does not happen overnight.

Different textures of food for baby

| Birth to 6 months | 6 to 7 months | 8 to 9 months | 10 to 12 months |
|--|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Infants require only breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula | Strained, pureed, smooth foods | Mashed, minced, grated, finely chopped foods; finger foods | Diced, cubed, mashed foods |



Did you know?

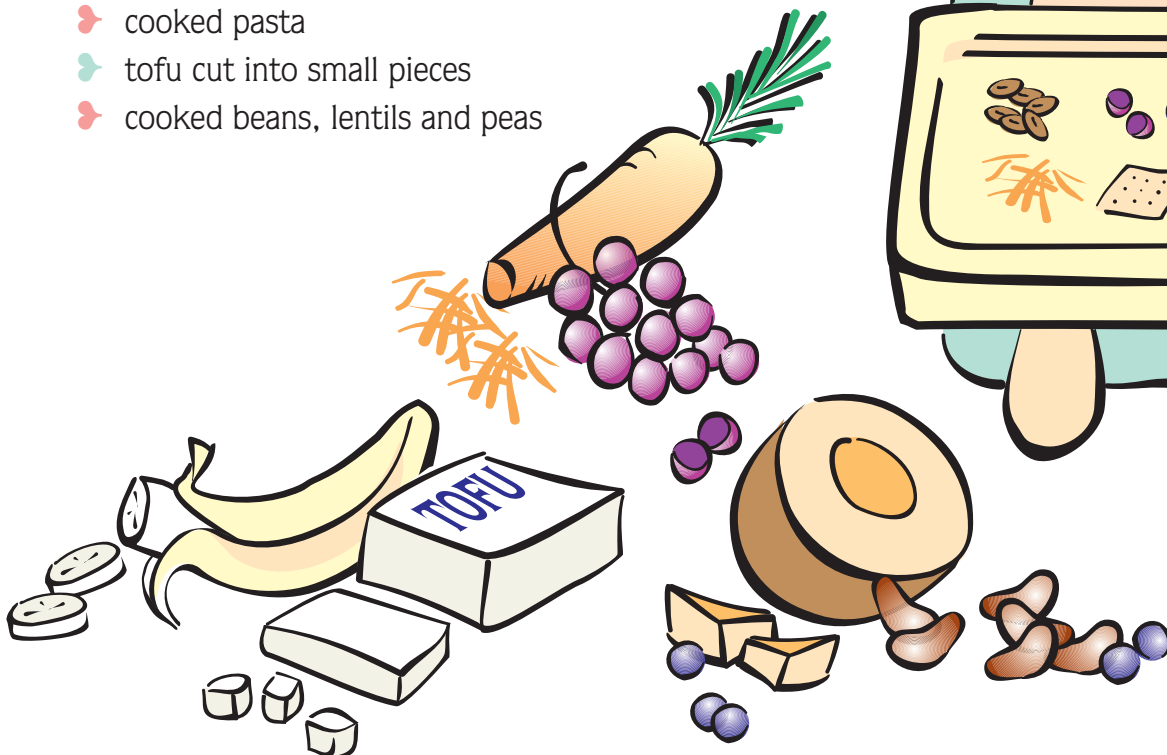
Making your own baby food lets you offer textures that are just right for your baby's unique needs and abilities. See page 13 for how-to ideas.

Finger Foods

- Around nine months of age, babies will be able to hold food in their hands and bring it to their mouths. Offering finger foods helps babies learn to chew and feed themselves.
- Most older babies enjoy eating with their hands. Be ready for some fun and a mess!
- Finger foods should be healthy foods. Avoid foods high in sugar or salt.

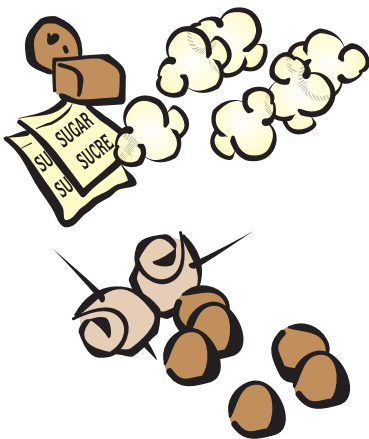
Examples of finger foods:

- soft, ripe, peeled fruit
 - cut into bite-size pieces or strips (ex: bananas, pears, peaches, plums, cantaloupe, or kiwi)
 - strawberries, blueberries and seedless grapes do not have to be peeled but should be cut into small, bite-sized pieces
- cooked vegetable pieces (cut into strips)
- dry toast strips, bread crusts, bread sticks, bagel pieces, rice cakes, melba toast, unsalted crackers
- shredded cheese, cheese cubes or cut-up cheese sticks
- cooked tender meat cut up finely or ground
- small pieces of casserole or stew
- cooked pasta
- tofu cut into small pieces
- cooked beans, lentils and peas



These foods are NOT good choices during baby's first year:

- honey (it can make your baby very sick with botulism, a type of food poisoning)
- candies and chocolate
- soft drinks, drink crystals, sport drinks
- tea, coffee, herbal teas
- salt, pickles
- diet foods sweetened with sugar substitutes
- low-fat and diet foods
- snack foods such as potato chips, pretzels, Cheezies, french fries
- cakes, cookies, sugar-coated cereal, Jell-O
- salad dressings, mayonnaise
- processed meats

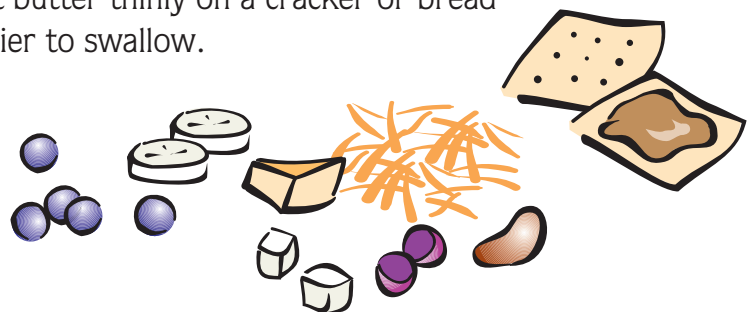


These foods could cause CHOKING and should be avoided until your child is about four years old:

- raisins, gum and hard candies (including cough drops)
- popcorn, nuts and sunflower seeds
- fish with bones
- snacks using toothpicks or skewers

These foods are safer for infants and young children when they are prepared as described:

- Make hard vegetables and fruit safer by: grating, removing pits from fruit, cutting grapes in half and removing the seeds, and softening raw vegetables by cooking.
- Cut wieners or hot dogs lengthwise and then into bite-sized pieces.
- Spread peanut butter thinly on a cracker or bread to make it easier to swallow.



Making your own baby food

There is no better way to feed your baby than by making your own baby food. Making food for your baby lets you offer textures that are just right for your baby's unique needs and abilities. Food can be prepared easily by mashing with a fork or potato masher, or by using an inexpensive food chopper or food blender.

Store-bought baby foods are fine, but not necessary. If you want convenience, you can buy frozen vegetables or canned vegetables without added salt and canned or frozen fruits with no sugar added.

The following section will give you ideas on how to make table food your baby can eat.

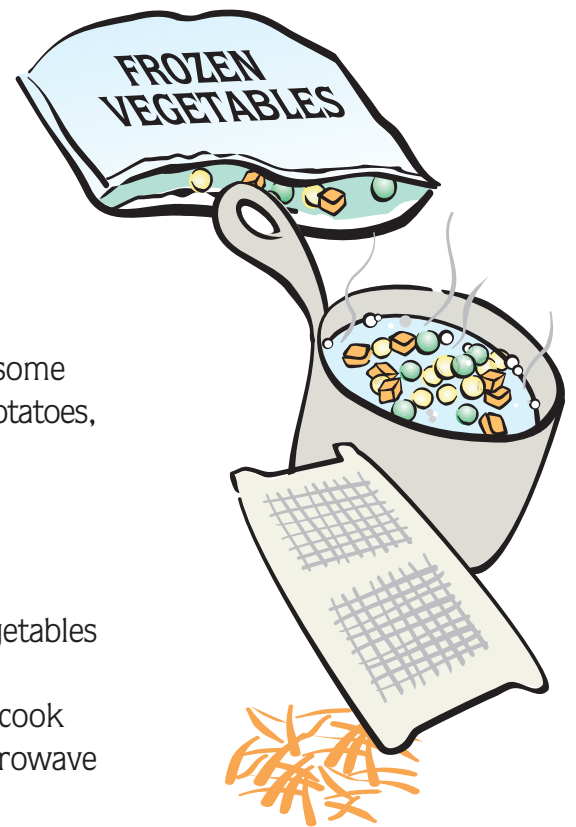
Preparing Vegetables

What to use:

- About a cup (250 ml) of fresh or frozen vegetables (some ideas are carrots, peas, green or yellow beans, squash, potatoes, sweet potatoes)
- About half a cup (125 ml) of water

What to do:

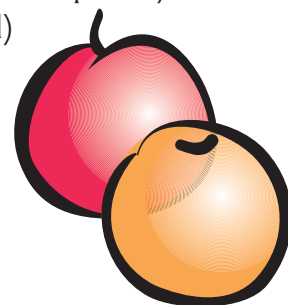
1. Wash, peel and slice fresh vegetables or use frozen vegetables (they do not have to be thawed before cooking).
2. Put vegetables into a pot of boiling water, cover and cook until soft. If using a microwave, put vegetables in a microwave safe bowl with water and heat on high until soft.
3. Drain the vegetables and save cooking liquid. You can use it if you need to moisten the vegetables.
4. Prepare to a texture that is suitable for your baby. Add some cooking liquid if you think the vegetables need more moisture.
5. Leftovers can be stored covered in the fridge for three days. You can also freeze leftovers.



Preparing Fruit

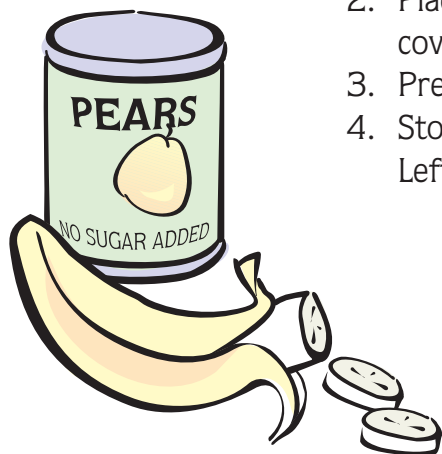
What to use:

- Two or three medium-size fruits (ex: apples, pears, peaches, plums) or about a cup (250 ml) of frozen fruit (no sugar added)
- About four to six tablespoons of water



What to do:

1. Wash fresh fruit. Peel, core and slice.
2. Place fruit (fresh or frozen) in boiling water and cook covered on low heat until tender. Do not drain.
3. Prepare to a texture that is suitable for your baby.
4. Store leftover fruit in a covered container in the fridge for three days. Leftovers may also be frozen.



NOTE:

- Ripe, soft fruits like bananas, mangos, papayas, avocados and canned fruit (no sugar added) do not need to be cooked.
- Bananas and avocados do not store well because they turn brown.

Preparing Fish

What to use:

- One-half pound (250 grams) de-boned fish fillets such as bass, sole, cod, perch, haddock or pickerel
- One-half cup (125 ml) breastmilk or formula with added iron (whole milk can be used if baby is at least nine months old)

What to do:

1. Pour milk into a large frying pan or pot. Heat gently but do not boil.
2. Add fish fillets to the milk. Cover with a lid and cook over low heat for five to 10 minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork. If using a microwave, put fish fillets and milk in a microwave safe bowl. Heat on high until fish flakes with a fork (cooking times will vary).
3. Flake fish with a fork.
4. Leftovers can be stored in a covered container in the refrigerator for two to three days. Leftovers can also be frozen in a covered container.



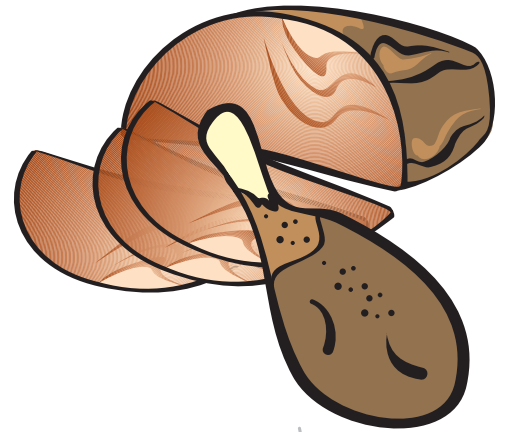
Preparing Meat or Poultry

What to use:

- One-half pound (250 grams) of lean meat, chicken or turkey
- Water

What to do:

1. Remove fat, skin and bones from the meat or poultry and cut into cubes.
2. Put into a pot of water and bring to a boil.
3. Turn the heat down and cook about 45 minutes.
Save the cooking water.
4. Chop the meat or poultry. Add a little cooking water to thin the mixture.
Prepare to a texture that is suitable for your baby.
5. Store prepared foods in a covered container in the refrigerator for two to three days. You can also freeze leftovers in a covered container.



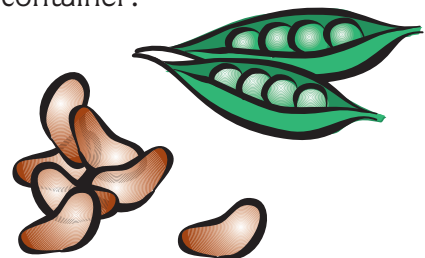
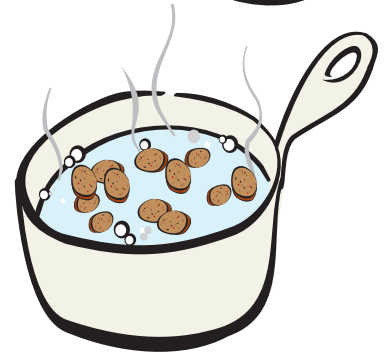
Preparing Legumes (peas, beans, lentils)

What to use:

- One cup (250 ml) cooked legumes (prepared using package directions)
or
- One can (19 oz/540 ml) canned legumes

What to do:

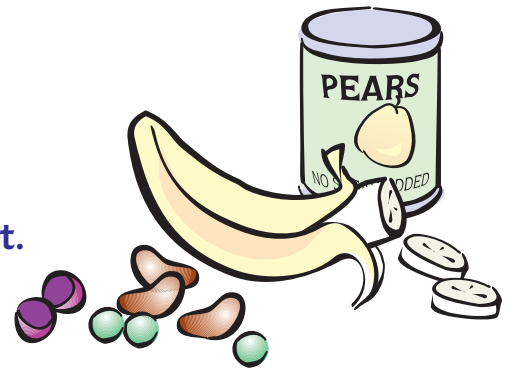
1. If using dried legumes, cook according to package directions.
2. If using canned legumes, drain and rinse well. They are already cooked.
3. Prepare to a texture that is suitable for your baby. Add a little water to moisten.
4. Store leftovers in a covered container in the refrigerator for two to three days. Leftovers can also be frozen in a covered container.





Feeding Guide

**Remember! Every baby is different.
This is only a guide.**



| Time of day | 6 Months | 7 Months | 8-9 Months | 10-11 Months | 12 months |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| Early Morning | Breastmilk or formula* | Breastmilk or formula* | Breastmilk or formula* | | <p>➤ Breastfeeding provides lots of benefits to you and your baby – keep going!</p> <p>➤ Offer a variety of table foods (watch for choking)</p> <p>➤ Wean your baby from the bottle.</p> |
| Morning | Breastmilk or formula* Infant single-grain cereal or other iron-rich food** | Breastmilk or formula* Infant cereal Fruit | Breastmilk or formula* Infant cereal Fruit | Breastmilk, formula*, or homo milk Infant cereal Fruit Yogurt Toast | |
| Noon | Breastmilk or formula* Infant single-grain cereal or other iron-rich food** | Breastmilk or formula* Infant cereal Vegetables Fruit | Breastmilk or formula* Infant cereal Fruit Vegetables Meat, chicken, fish, beans, or egg yolk | Breastmilk, formula*, or homo milk Infant cereal Fruit Vegetables Meat, chicken, fish, beans, or egg yolk Bread or pasta | |
| Afternoon | Breastmilk or formula* | Breastmilk or formula* | Breastmilk or formula* | Breastmilk, formula*, or homo milk Fruit Cheese | |
| Late Afternoon/ Early Evening | Breastmilk or formula* Infant single-grain cereal or other iron-rich food** | Breastmilk or formula* Infant cereal or other iron-rich food** Vegetables Fruit | Breastmilk or formula* Fruit Vegetables Meat, chicken, fish, beans or egg yolk | Breastmilk, formula*, or homo milk Fruit Vegetables Meat, chicken, fish, beans, or egg yolk Bread or pasta | |
| Evening | Breastmilk or formula* | Breastmilk or formula* | Breastmilk or formula* | Breastmilk or formula* | |
| Night Time | Breastmilk or formula* | Breastmilk or formula* | | | |

* Iron-rich infant formula

** Iron-rich foods such as meat, chicken, fish, beans or egg yolk

TIP: Try offering your baby water or breastmilk in a cup at meal times.

TIP: Your baby should sit in a highchair during meal times.