

Vitamins and minerals

Iron is needed for growth and to carry oxygen in blood. Babies are born with a store of iron that will last about 6 months.

Giving your baby iron-rich foods daily will build-up body stores of iron. For example:

- Beef, lamb/mutton, goat, pork, chicken, turkey and liver.
- Oily fish, such as sardines and pilchards.
- Lentils, chickpeas, beans.
- Eggs and fortified foods e.g. breakfast cereals and white bread.
- Leafy green vegetables e.g. callaloo, spinach.
- Vitamin C from fruit and vegetables eaten at a meal will help your baby get the iron from vegetables.

Calcium is needed for building and maintaining strong bones and teeth. It's also needed for muscles to work.

Good sources of calcium include cow's milk, cheese and yoghurts, green leafy vegetables and calcium-fortified alternatives to cow's milk.

Vitamin D helps us get calcium from foods and is needed for healthy bones and teeth.

Best source of vitamin D is sunshine on skin between April and September in the UK.

Because diet does not provide the recommended amount of vitamin D for children under 5-years-old, it is advisable to give your baby a vitamin D supplement daily.

Ask your health visitor for more information.

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Available online.

Visit www.lewisham.nhs.uk and search 'introducing solid foods' or check under A-Z services.

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Thinking About

Introducing Solid Foods?

PRACTICAL TIPS

on food, new skills, vitamins and lots more!



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On offering solids from 6 months



Beginning solid foods

Babies who are nearly six months old are ready to move onto solid foods whether they are having breast-milk or infant formula.

At this age they can

- 1. Sit up without support.** It will be easier and safer to feed your baby once they are sitting up.
- 2. Pick up objects** and put them to their mouth!
- 3. Chew objects.** They don't need teeth to chew.
- 4. Swallow rather than suck.** They use their tongue to move food from front to back of mouth.



Getting baby used to eating solid foods is more important than how **much** they eat.

From 6 months, babies should continue to have breast milk or infant formula milk **alongside** appropriate amounts of solid food.

In the first six months of life, breast milk or infant formula provides all the nourishment a baby needs. It is best to wait until 6 months before introducing solid foods, but if you choose to start before, talk to your health visitor.

Never give any solid foods before 17 weeks.

If your baby was premature, talk to your health visitor about the right age to start your baby on solid foods.



Taking solid foods from 6 to 12 months

First steps From around 6 months	Next steps 7-9 months	Stepping up 9-12 months
SKILLS TO LEARN		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using tongue to move soft mashed food from the front of the mouth to the back for swallowing. Getting used to the taste and feel of food in their mouth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving lumps of mashed food around the mouth and chewing soft lumps. Feeding themselves soft finger foods. Sipping from a free-flowing cup. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chewing minced and chopped food. Using a spoon to feed themselves. Feeding themselves hard finger foods. Drinking from a free-flowing cup.
<p>If you choose to start with puree, move to soft well-mashed texture quickly.</p>	<p>Babies can manage textured food even without teeth.</p>	<p>Making food into bite size chunks, makes it easier to pick up and self-feed.</p>
HOW MUCH TO GIVE DAILY		
One building up to two meals	Two meals building up to three meals	Three meals and two healthy finger food snacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially 1-3 teaspoons mashed food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small amount of two courses (savory dish and a milk or fruit pudding). 	
<p>It's OK if your baby only eats very small amounts at first.</p>	<p>Your baby's portion size should be smaller than everyone else's in the family.</p>	



Milk feeds

- **At first**, your baby will still need more breast milk or infant formula than solid foods.
- **When your baby starts eating more solid foods**, they will need **fewer milk feeds** during the day.
- **From 12 months**, your baby can have full-fat cow's milk as a drink and/or continue with breast feeds.
- **After 12 months**, your baby needs about ½ pint (300ml) full fat milk daily. Less milk is needed when they eat cheese or yoghurt.

At this age, remember that too much milk may lessen your child's appetite for solid foods.

Drinks at mealtimes

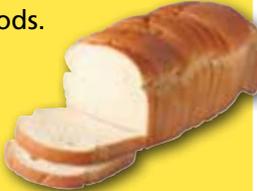
Before 6 months, babies get all the fluid they need from breast milk or infant formula. As your baby begins to eat more solid food, offer sips of water from a teaspoon or a free-flowing cup.



Foods to offer

From 6 to 12 months

Starchy food
Breads, pasta, rice, potato, yam, noodles, chapatti and other starchy foods.



INCLUDE AT EACH MEAL

Some first foods you might want to try

- Baby cereals e.g. baby rice or porridge.
- Mashed potato, sweet potato or yam.
- White rice or other starchy foods such as maize, millet, cornmeal and ground rice.



Finger food ideas
Offer at mealtimes or as part of a snack

- Buttered fingers of toast.
- Bread sticks or rice cakes (unsalted).
- Cooked (and cooled) pasta shapes.
- Roast or boiled potato.



Some meal ideas
Give as mashed, minced or chopped (to suit your baby's development)

Protein food
Meat (e.g. beef, lamb/mutton, pork, chicken and turkey), oily fish (e.g. mackerel, salmon), white fish (e.g. cod, plaice), egg, pulses (e.g. lentils, peas, beans).



INCLUDE IN TWO MEALS EACH DAY

Some first foods you might want to try

- Well-cooked boneless meat, fish or chicken.
- Mashed lentils, split peas, chickpeas or other pulses.



Finger food ideas
Offer at mealtimes or as part of a snack

- Boiled egg.
- Pieces of cooked meat & fish.



Breakfasts
Unsweetened breakfast cereal made with baby's usual milk (e.g. porridge oats, wheat cereal or ground rice)
Well-cooked egg: scrambled, poached or boiled (with toast)
Mashed banana or smooth nut butter on bread

Quick meals
Pasta shapes with tomato sauce and grated cheese
Cheese & broccoli pasta
Omelette, 'eggy' bread
Avocado & banana mash
Sweet potato & bean mash
Baked beans (reduced salt) on toast
Jacket potato with grated cheese

All fruit & vegetables



INCLUDE IN TWO MEALS

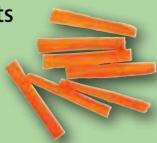
Some first foods you might want to try

- Mashed vegetables such as parsnip, carrot, broccoli or a mixture of vegetables.
- Mashed ripe fruit, such as banana, pear, avocado or cooked fruit.



Finger food ideas
Offer at mealtimes or as part of a snack

- Cooked and cooled vegetables: green beans, carrot sticks, florets of cauliflower and broccoli.
- Slices of ripe fruits e.g. pear, melon, banana.



Main meals
Serve main meals with vegetables and potatoes (roasted, mashed or boiled) or rice or pasta or bread
Meat dishes (e.g. beef stew, turkey casserole, roast chicken, meatballs)
Fish dishes (e.g. fish poached in milk, fish pie, salmon fishcakes)
Soup (e.g. meat, fish or chunky vegetable)

Dairy food
Cheese and yoghurt (offer full-fat pasteurised versions).



AT MEAL TIMES

Some first foods you might want to try

- Full-fat natural yoghurt.
- Grated cheese in cooked food.

Finger food ideas
Offer at mealtimes or as part of a snack

- Cheese cubes.



Vegetarian meals
Lentils & rice, cauliflower or macaroni cheese, rice & peas, vegetable lasagna

Desserts
Pieces of fresh soft fruit, e.g. pear, banana, melon
Tinned fruit in its own juice (e.g. strawberries, peaches, pears)
Stewed fruit (e.g. apples, apricots with stones removed)
Full-fat milk pudding or yoghurt or fromage frais
Pancakes with fruit

Remember!
Do not add salt to your baby's food.
The best baby food is home-made.

Foods to avoid

- **Salt and salty foods.** Do not add salt to your baby's food during cooking or at the table. Do not give salty processed foods/snacks e.g. smoked meats, crisps, or use stock cubes (unless salt-free) and soya sauce. A baby's kidneys cannot cope with too much salt.
- **Sugar and sugary foods.** Do not add these to other food or drinks. Avoid adding rusks or baby cereal foods to bottles of milk. This practice can lead to unhealthy weight gain, a preference for sweet foods and tooth decay.
- **Foods high in fibre** e.g. wholemeal bread or pasta, brown rice and wholegrain cereals can reduce the amount of iron your baby gets. Your baby can get the fibre they need from fruit and vegetables.
- **Foods low in fat.** Babies need lots of energy to grow. Foods, naturally rich in fat e.g. full-fat dairy products, provide energy and vitamins.

Risky foods...

- ✗ Honey should not be given until 12 months. Honey occasionally contains a bacteria (causing botulism) that can make a baby seriously ill.
- ✗ Whole nuts are a choking risk. From 6 months, your baby can have crushed nuts. If there is a family history of allergy (e.g. in a parent, brother or sister) speak to your health visitor before giving nuts to your baby for the first time.
- ✗ Under-cooked eggs, meat and fish. These should all be fully-cooked.



For complete information on solid foods visit NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) Search for 'Pregnancy and baby Guide', and find 'Weaning and solid foods' under 'Babies and toddlers'

Helpful hints on offering solids from 6 months

1. **It's good to give your baby a wide selection of healthy foods early on.** It doesn't matter which foods they try first, but make sure you offer a variety of foods straight away.
2. **Encourage finger foods straightaway.** Babies enjoy them and it helps build confidence to self-feed.
3. **Remember your baby will need to learn how to eat solid foods.** If they don't seem to want the foods you offer, try them again on another day.
4. **Your baby will let you know when they are full.** They will turn their face away, close their mouth or push food away.
5. **All babies are different.** Be patient in getting your baby used to new foods!
6. **Home-made meals** are better tasting, cheaper and may help prevent fussy eating later on.



Gag reflex

- A gag reflex is nature's way of moving food from the back of the throat into the front of the mouth. Learning to move food this way is how your baby learns to chew and swallow food safely.
- Gagging is noisy and when a baby gags they may turn red in the face but they will usually continue to eat.
- If a baby gags or coughs **frequently**, discuss this with your health visitor for further advice.

Healthy teeth

- When your baby gets teeth, brush them with a small soft toothbrush and a smear of family fluoride toothpaste.
- Milk and water are best for teeth. From 6 months a free-flowing cup can be introduced.
- By 12 months, infants should have all drinks from a free-flowing cup (except drinks from the breast).



- It is good to get your child into the habit of expecting water.
- Fruit juices and squashes contain sugar which can harm children's teeth.



PRACTICAL TIPS

- Remember to **wash your hands** before preparing food and to wash your **child's hand** before eating.
- **Wash all dishes and cutlery** (used to feed your baby) in hot soapy water and rinse well.
- Continue to **sterilise milk feeding bottles, cups or beakers**.
- You can **freeze home-cooked food** in small portions.
- **Don't keep cooked food for your baby for longer than 24 hours in a fridge or longer than 1 month in the freezer.** Thawed food should not be refrozen.
- **Cooked food** should not be **reheated** more than **once**. It should be piping hot. Allow to cool before serving.
- When heating food in a **microwave**, stir it thoroughly and allow to cool before serving.
- Keep **raw food** separate from cooked food in the fridge.
- Do not use **processed food** after the 'use-by' date or when packaging is damaged.
- Always **follow cooking instructions** on packaging.

