



Teddy Bear's Picnic

*Your Guide to Introducing
Solid Foods to Your Baby*



Region of Waterloo

PUBLIC HEALTH

Your Guide to Starting Your Baby on Solid Foods

Deciding when to feed your baby solid foods and what to feed your baby can be confusing. Everyone seems to have advice – your family, friends, doctor, magazines....

This guide may help you sort out what is best for you and your baby.

The information in this booklet is based on infant feeding recommendations found in the document "Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants" Statement of the Joint Working Group: Canadian Paediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada and Health Canada, 2005 found at www.cps.ca under "Publications and Resources/Nutrition".

This booklet gives general information for healthy babies. If you have more questions, contact your doctor or call the Healthy Children Info Line at 519-883-2245 to speak with a Public Health Nurse.

Starting Solid Foods

Health Canada recommends that babies begin to eat solid foods (foods other than breastmilk or formula) at six months of age. If solid foods are started too soon or too late, there is a greater chance of problems.

Solid Foods Too Early

- higher risk of food allergies or intolerances
- may not get enough breast milk or formula
- may cause your baby to choke
- hard on baby's kidneys and digestive system



Solid Foods Too Late

- slow to accept solid food
- baby may have a hard time chewing food
- iron deficiency anemia (low blood iron)
- not enough nutrients to grow and develop properly

Signs that your baby is ready to try solids

- Your baby is around six months of age
- Sits alone or with little help can control his head well
- Is interested when others are eating
- Watches spoon and opens mouth when spoon comes
- Closes lips over spoon

MYTH – Giving cereal to your baby will help him sleep through the night.

FACT – Every baby is different. It may be many months before your baby sleeps through the night.

Tips For Feeding Your Baby Solid Foods

- Feed your baby in a sitting position. He should be sitting up and facing you
- Give new foods one at a time and at least three days apart. That way, if he has a food allergy or intolerance, it will be easier to know which food caused it
- Give small amounts of food at first (1 to 3 teaspoons or 5 to 15 ml). Foods should be given by spoon
- Begin with pureed foods at six months and move to lumpier, mashed foods, as he gets better at eating solid foods. When he is older and eating more solid foods, he will take less breastmilk or formula
- Do not force him to eat a new food. If he turns his head away, leans away or loses interest in food, try it again in 2–3 days. Your baby may need to try a food up to 20 times before he eats it
- Stop feeding when he shows you he has had enough. Always listen to your baby. NEVER force your baby to eat



Introducing Solids

First Foods

Iron rich foods are recommended as the first solid foods to give your baby. Iron is important to keep your baby healthy. Infant cereals that have iron added and meat and meat alternatives are good sources of iron.

Cereal

- infant cereals with added iron are usually the first solids offered
- start with a single grain cereal like rice; it is easy to digest and is low risk for causing allergies
- follow the mixing instructions on the package. Infant cereal can be mixed with breastmilk, formula or water. Cereals that contain formula should be mixed with water only. Be sure to read the label
- after 3 days using the same cereal, you may give another single grain cereal like barley or oatmeal
- cereal should be given to your baby on a spoon. Do not add cereal to bottles, this may cause choking and over feeding

Meat and Meat Alternatives

These foods include cooked egg yolk, turkey, beef, chicken, lamb, pork, fish, and well cooked legumes (chickpeas, lentils, beans) and tofu

- serve only 1–3 tsp (5 to 15 ml) of pureed meat at first
- iron from meat sources is better absorbed than iron from non-meat sources
- it is important to keep feeding time happy. If your baby does not like the taste of meat as a first food do not force him to eat it. Try again at a later time

Do not give egg white to your baby until he is at least 12 months old because it may cause an allergic reaction.

TIP – Baby food ‘dinners’ found in jars are low in meat. It is better to buy meats and vegetables on their own and then mix them yourself.

Vegetables and Fruit

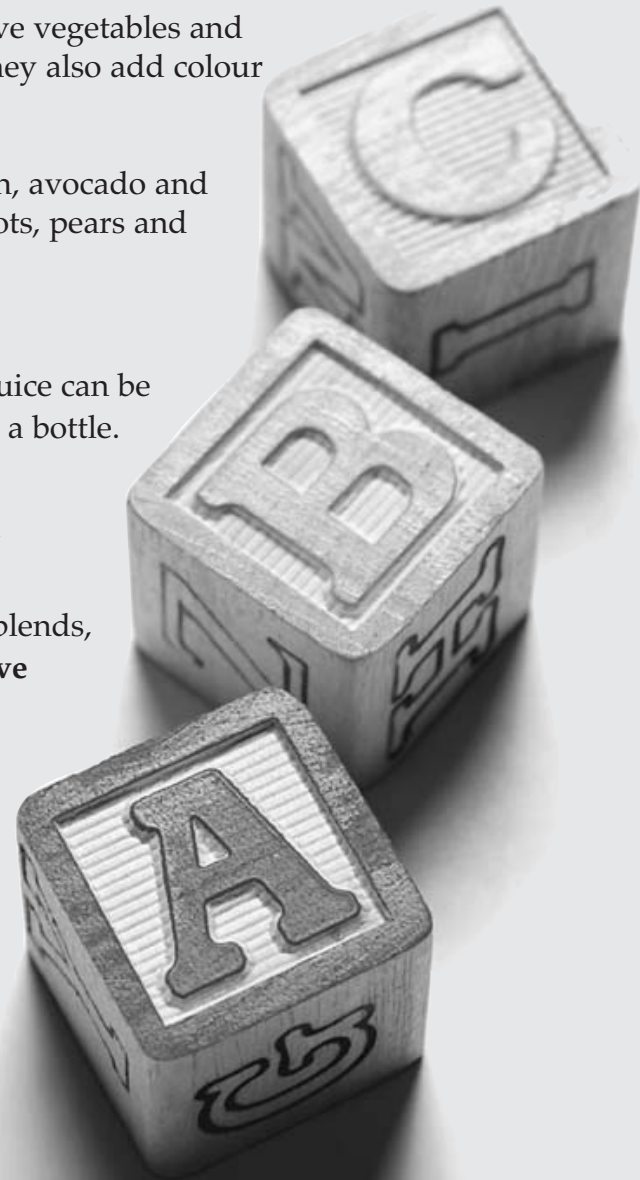
After your baby is eating cereals or meat/meat alternatives you can give vegetables and fruits. Vegetables and fruit are high in vitamins, minerals and fibre. They also add colour and variety to your baby's diet.

First give mild tasting vegetables like carrots, green beans, peas, squash, avocado and sweet potatoes. You can also give fruits such as pureed peaches, apricots, pears and bananas. Slowly change from smooth purees, to mashed to chopped.

Fruit Juice

- Do not give your baby fruit juice before the age of six months. Fruit juice can be given to your baby when he can drink from a cup. Never put juice in a bottle. It is bad for his teeth.
- Only give 4 ounces (120ml) or less of juice per day. Babies have small stomachs and can fill up on juice leaving little room for other foods.
- Only give 100% pure fruit juice. Do not give fruit beverages, drinks, blends, cocktails, crystals and punches – they are too high in sugar. **Never give unpasteurized cider or fruit juice to your baby.**
- Save money by buying regular juice instead of "baby juice".

Baby food jars of fruit "desserts" have added sugars. It is best to offer fruit that is pureed or mashed.



Choosing Foods Based On What Your Baby Can Do

Typical Age	What your baby can do	Type of Feeding	Suggested foods
Birth to 6 months	Cuddles Roots for nipple Sucks Swallows	Nipple feeding on demand	Breastmilk or iron fortified formula
6 months	Begins to sit Follows food with eyes Opens mouth for spoon Moves semi-solid food to back of tongue Swallows semi-solids	Nipple feeding on demand Spoon feeding of semi-solid food	Breastmilk or iron fortified formula Iron-fortified baby rice or barley cereal Pureed meat/meat alternatives, vegetables and fruit
6 to 8 months	Moves tongue to sides of mouth Positions food in mouth Delays Swallowing Munches by chewing up and down Grasps food with palm of hand Scrapes food from hand into mouth Drinks from a cup	Spoon feeding and finger feeding of thicker, lumpier food. Cup drinking	Breastmilk or iron fortified formula Pureed foods Fork-mashed vegetables and fruit Mashed potatoes Soft, diced fruit Sticky rice chopped noodles and other pasta Cottage cheese, yogurt
7 to 10 months	Bites off food Chews with rotary movement Moves food side-to-side in mouth, pausing in the middle Curves lip around cup Uses thumb and forefinger to grasp food	Finger feeding of lumpy food, pieces of soft food. Cup drinking	Breastmilk or iron fortified formula Cut-up cooked vegetables Diced, cooked or canned fruits (in juice) Grated fresh fruit Tender ground meats Casseroles Crackers, dry, unsweetened cereal Toast Cottage cheese, yogurt
9 to 12 months	Becomes more skillful with hands Finger feeds Improves chewing Improves cup-drinking Is interested in food Becomes more sociable at family table	Finger feeding of table foods Cup drinking	Breastmilk or iron fortified formula Pieces of soft, cooked foods from family table. Tender meats that are cut/chopped finely across the grain Pieces of soft, raw fruit (like bananas or peaches) Crackers and toast Dry, unsweetened cereal, cheese, egg yolk, and legumes.

How Much Do I Feed My Baby?

Let your baby be your guide. His appetite will change every day, just like yours. He will let you know when he has had enough by turning his head or keeping his mouth closed. Babies lose interest in feeding when they are full. Look for these signs and trust him. Making a child eat food is force-feeding. This does not teach your child how to listen to his body. Force-feeding may lead to lifelong eating problems.

As a parent it is your job to choose healthy foods that your baby can eat and offer them at meal and snack times. It is up to your baby to decide what and how much he will eat.

Create a positive feeding time for your baby:

- a positive feeding relationship is based on trust. Your baby needs to trust that you will give him food when he is hungry. You need to trust that your baby will eat the right amount of food
- offer food at the table
- be a positive role model for your baby; eat together
- offer food in a quiet place. Turn off the television and radio
- respect your baby's likes and dislikes

Always follow your baby's lead:

- let your baby open his mouth before you feed him
- let your baby touch his food
- allow your baby to feed himself as soon as he shows interest
- offer food as quickly or slowly as your baby wants
- be patient with new foods. Never force your baby to eat
- don't worry if your child refuses a meal or two



What and How Much Do I Feed My Baby?

Making Your Own Baby Food

Making your own baby food can save money and can give your baby different foods than what is found in jars. You can vary the texture of food easily and some babies may like the taste of homemade food better than jarred food.

Be sure to cook and store food properly. As a general rule be "Clean and Quick". Follow these basic recipes but change the amount liquid if you need to change the texture. Begin with smooth textures and then move to thicker, lumpier textures, as your baby gets better at eating solid foods.

Foods	Liquid	Yield
Cooked vegetables - 3/4 cup (200 ml)	3 Tbsp (45 ml) water	1/3 – 1/2 cup (75 –120 ml)
Cooked fruit - 1/3–1/2 cup (75 –120 ml)	2 tsp (10ml) fruit juice or water	1/3 – 1/2 cup (75 –120 ml)
Cooked meats - 1/2 cup (120 ml)	4 Tbsp (60 ml) water, breastmilk or formula.	1/3 – 1/2 cup (75 –120 ml)



Tips

- Before you start, wash your hands and all equipment well
- Cook food quickly in a small amount of water, or steam
- Do not add butter, gravy, salt, herbs, sauces, spices, sugar, honey or molasses to recipes
- Cooked, ground meats (ground beef, chicken, pork, turkey or veal) may be easier to puree than other meats
- Cooked or frozen vegetables can be pureed. Avoid canned vegetables – they are high in salt
- Cooked, fresh, frozen or canned (in own juice) fruit can be pureed
- Remove seeds and tough skin from vegetables and fruit before processing
- Do not refrigerate pureed food longer than three days
- For freezer storage, place puree in ice cube trays or "drop" spoonfuls on a cookie sheet and freeze. Once frozen, put in freezer bags and label for storage. Vegetables and fruits can be in the freezer for 6-8 months, purees made with milk 4-6 weeks, and cooked meats for 10 weeks

Thaw only the amount of puree needed for a meal. Thaw frozen baby food in the refrigerator. Once thawed, heat cubes in a double boiler or place in a bowl to be put in a hot water bath. Never refreeze thawed puree.

Warming Food

A hot water bath is the **SAFEST WAY** to warm bottles, jars or containers of food.

Warming baby food in the microwave. Be very careful if you choose to heat your baby's food in the microwave. Microwaves heat food and liquids unevenly and can create hot spots that can burn your baby. Be sure to stir the food and test the temperature before serving it to your baby. Use the back of your hand to be sure the food is warm, but not hot.

How to heat food in a microwave

- Put food into a microwave-safe dish
- Heat on low to medium setting
- Food may heat unevenly. Mix the food well before testing the temperature.
- Different foods heat at different rates. If heating more than one type of food in a dish, test the temperature of each food separately



Making Your Own Baby Food

Starting Table Foods

Once your baby is eating pureed or mashed foods well, slowly offer softer table foods (usually between 8–12 months). Even if he has few or no teeth he can learn how to chew. If lumpier foods are given too late, it may be hard to get your baby to try them.

Offer new textures gradually. Give small amounts of soft or lumpy foods that your baby has already had in a pureed or mashed form. Over time, increase the lumpiness of the foods and give your baby foods from the family table that has been made with little or no seasoning. Safe finger foods include bread crusts, pieces of soft cooked vegetables and fruit, soft ripe fruit such as banana, cooked meat and poultry and shredded cheese. Limit foods that have a lot of sugar or salt.

Help your baby to learn to feed himself. Babies need to explore their food and learn how to feed themselves. Make mealtimes fun. Let your baby feed himself and play with his food. Give your baby his own spoon or fork if he is reaching for yours. This way, you can both feed baby! "Practice makes perfect" but it also makes a mess, so be prepared!

Once your baby gets tired of feeding himself, offer help to see if he is still hungry. Don't forget to eat with your baby to be a good role model.

Choking

Always stay with your baby when he is eating, and make sure he is sitting while eating. Foods that increase the risk of choking are hard, small and round, or smooth and sticky. Large cheese cubes, pieces of raw vegetables and some dry cereals may also cause problems.

FOODS THAT MAY CAUSE CHOKING - popcorn, hard candies, gum, raisins, peanuts or other nuts, sunflower seeds, fish with bones, and snacks using toothpicks or skewers.

Some foods can be made safer by preparing them in different ways. For example, dice or cut wieners lengthwise, grate raw fruits or vegetables, and cut grapes into quarters.

Starting Milk

Milk is high in protein, calcium, vitamin A, D and riboflavin.

Breastmilk or iron-fortified formula is recommended until your baby is 9–12 months of age. Whole cow's milk (homogenized, 3.25%) may be started when your baby is eating a variety of iron rich foods like infant cereal, meat and alternatives, grains and green vegetables. Waiting until 12 months is better because cow's milk does not provide the same nutrients as breastmilk or formula, especially iron. Low iron can cause growth, development, behaviour and learning problems.

Whole (3.25% fat) cow's milk is recommended until your baby is at least two years old.



Types of Milk that are NOT recommended.

1. Lower fat cow's milk (2%, 1% or skim milk) should not be used until your baby is at least two years of age. Your baby needs the higher fat in the whole milk for proper growth and brain development.
2. Unpasteurized milk (cow or goat) contains bacteria that can harm your baby. Never give unpasteurized milk.
3. Soy and rice beverages do not have all the nutrients and fat that your baby needs. If there is a milk allergy, it is recommended that breast milk or infant formula be used until two years.

Sample Feeding Schedule

Remember: Every baby is different and this is only a guide. The amount of food your baby eats and his appetite will vary.

Feeding	Around 6 months	6 to 7 months	8 to 9 months	9 to 12 months
Early morning	breastmilk or 5-6 oz. (150-180ml) formula	breastmilk or 6-7 oz (180-210 ml) formula		
Breakfast	breastmilk or 5-6 oz. (150-180ml) formula 1-2 tablespoons (15-30ml) infant cereal	breastmilk or 6-7 oz (180-210 ml) formula 1-3 tablespoons (15-45 ml) infant cereal 1-2 tablespoons (15-30 ml) fruit	breastmilk or 7-8 oz (210-240 ml) formula 3-5 tablespoons (45-75 ml) infant cere- al 1-2 tablespoons (15-30 ml) fruit	breastmilk or 7-8 oz (210-240 ml) formula or whole milk 4-6 tablespoons infant cereal 1/4 -1/2 sliced banana
Lunch	breastmilk or 5-6 oz. (150-180ml) formula	breastmilk or 6-7 oz (180-210 ml) formula 1-2 tablespoons (15-30 ml) vegetable or fruit 1-2 tablespoons (15-30 ml) meat/meat alternatives	breastmilk or 7-8 oz (210-250 ml) formula 3-6 tablespoons (45-90 ml) vegetable 2-5 tablespoons (30-75 ml) meat/meat alternatives 2-4 tablespoons (30-60 ml) fruit	Snack 4 tablespoons (60ml) yogurt 1 arrowroot cookie Lunch breastmilk or 4 oz (120ml) formula or whole milk 1/4 slice whole wheat bread with margarine 2-3 tablespoons (30-40 ml) canned tuna 3-5 tablespoons (45-75 ml) cooked carrot pieces
Late Afternoon	breastmilk or 5-6 oz. (150-180ml) formula	breastmilk or 6-7 oz (180-210 ml) formula	breastmilk or 7-8 oz (210-250 ml) formula	breastmilk or 7-8 oz (210-250 ml) formula
Dinner	breastmilk or 5-6 oz. (150-180ml) formula	breastmilk or 6-7 oz (180-210 ml) formula 3-4 tablespoons (45-60 ml) infant cereal 1-2 tablespoons (15-30 ml) vegetable or fruit	breastmilk or 3-4 oz (90-120 ml) formula 3-5 tablespoons (45 -75 ml) infant cere- al 2-5 tablespoons (30-75 ml) vegetable 2-5 tablespoons (30-75 ml) fruit	Breastmilk or 4 oz (120ml) formula or whole milk 2-3 tablespoons (30-40ml) chopped meat 1-2 tablespoons (15-30ml) rice 3-5 tablespoons (45-75ml) vegetable 3-4 tablespoons (45-60ml) fruit pieces
Evening	breastmilk or 5-6 oz. (150-180ml) formula	breastmilk or 6-7 oz (180-210 ml) formula	7-8 oz (210-240 ml) breastmilk or for- mula	Breastmilk or 7-8 oz (210-240ml) formula or whole milk

Sample menu

Food Allergies

An allergy is an abnormal reaction of the immune system to a protein in food.

Food allergies affect about 1–8 per cent of babies. Many allergies may go away before school age. Babies are more likely to have allergies if a family member, like a parent, brother or sister, has allergies.

Some symptoms of allergies may include:

stomach pain

diarrhea

hives or skin rash

itchy and watery eyes

runny nose

swelling of the mouth and face

Talk to your doctor if you think your baby has had a reaction to food or if there is a history of food allergies in your family. Removing foods from your baby's diet may cause problems with growth and development. Once you learn that your baby has a food allergy, you may need to talk to a Registered Dietitian to help plan a healthy diet for your baby.

Foods that cause most food allergies include:

citrus fruits

fish

peanuts and other nuts

eggs

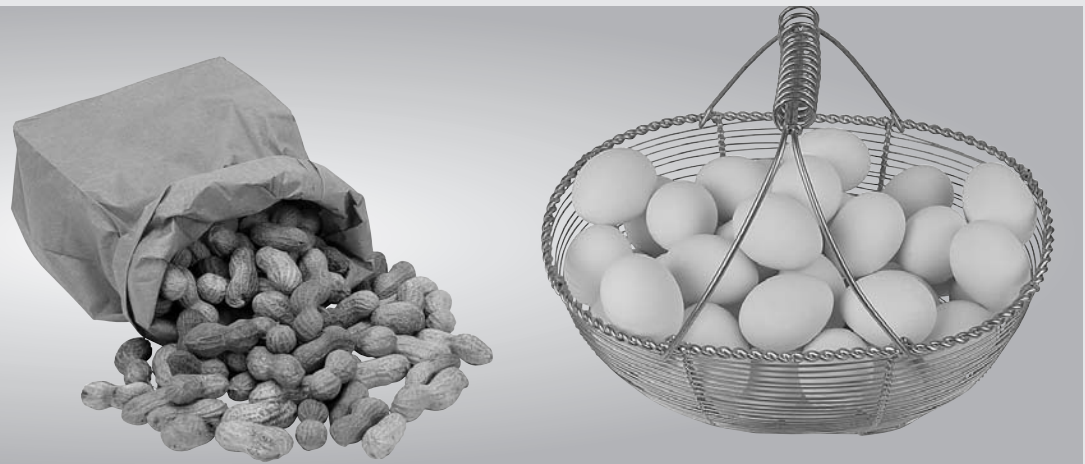
shellfish

milk and milk products

corn

soy

wheat



Safety

Baby food from a jar

When buying and giving your baby food from a jar:

- make sure the plastic safety seal on the jar has not been broken
- listen for a 'popping' sound when jar is opened for the first time. Do not give food from jars that do not make this sound
- keep opened jars of baby food sealed or covered and in the refrigerator for no longer than three days. Mark the date the jar was opened on the lid to help keep track
- do not feed directly from the jar. This can put bacteria from your baby's mouth into food that is left in the jar



Food Poisoning

Do not give honey before 12 months of age (to prevent botulism, a form of food poisoning).

Do not give unpasteurized milk, juice or cider.

Make sure egg yolks are cooked completely and do not use foods that contain raw eggs to avoid salmonella food poisoning.

Do not feed your baby fresh or frozen tuna steaks, swordfish, shark, marlin or tilefish, mushellunge or walleye. These fish are high in mercury. Choose "light" canned tuna instead of "white" or albacore canned tuna for your baby.

Allergies, Safety and Food Poisoning

Where to Get Infant Feeding Help

Infant Feeding Support

Healthy Children Information Line, Region of Waterloo Public Health	519-883-2245
Community Information Centre.....	519-579-3800
Telehealth	866-797-0000
Motherisk.....	416-813-6780
Meet With A Nurse - Early Years Centre,	
Kitchener.....	519-571-1626
Kitchener-Waterloo.....	519-741-8585
Cambridge	519-740-8353

Infant Feeding Rooms

Fairview Park Mall, (Sears Infant Wear Department)	519- 745-4404 ext. 250
Region of Waterloo, Community Health & Social Services Building, Waterloo.....	519-883-2000
Community Health & Social Services Building, Cambridge.....	519-621-6110
Cambridge Centre Mall (Sears 2 x 6X Children's Wear Department).....	519-745-4404 ext. 250
Kitchener City Hall	519-741-2286
Waterloo Regional Children's Museum	519-749-9387

Websites

Caring for Kids (Canadian Paediatric Society): www.caringforkids.cps.ca

Health Canada: www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Dietitians of Canada: www.dietitians.ca

Tiny Tummies: www.tinytummies.com

Canadian Health Network: www.canadian-health-network.ca

Food Allergy Network: www.foodallergy.org

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