

A Guide to Weaning

Also known as Complementary Feeding





The NHS advice is that weaning should begin at around **6 months of age**, which is when your baby's digestive system has sufficiently matured to be able to cope with solid food. They also should have the ability to bite and chew. You should aim to introduce your baby to a varied range of textures and tastes so that by the time they reach their first birthday, they are already enjoying a balanced, healthy diet.

It is important to move forward at the right pace as no two babies are the same. Whilst some will enjoy the process of experiencing new tastes and textures, others will take time and may be less keen. Most parents will introduce their baby to solids at a time of day when they are not too tired or hungry and it is usually advisable to offer their usual milk feed first.

If they don't seem very interested, then leave it and try again another time. They will still be getting all the nutrients they need from their breast or formula milk feeds.

This is a big change so don't be put off if your baby doesn't take to it straight away. It will take time to get used to new tastes and textures, some babies accept this more quickly than others.

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When your baby is ready, you can increase the frequency of feeding from just once to three times a day. At this stage, you should also introduce pureed meat or pulses and some full-fat milk products such as baby yoghurts. (Full-fat milk should not be offered as a drink until your baby is a year old but it can be used in cooking). Reduce the amount of cereal such as baby rice, but continue offering a variety of different fruits and vegetables.

Remember to keep your baby safe by; not reheating any uneaten food, testing the temperature before giving food to your baby and not leaving your baby unsupervised whilst eating.

Foods to try include:

- Pureed fruit (banana or cooked apple/pear)
- Pureed cooked vegetables (carrot, parsnip, sweet potato)
- Baby Rice or similar

These should be offered mixed with a little of your baby's usual milk (breast or formula) so that it is a sloppy consistency, and offered a little at a time, on a weaning spoon.

When you start to offer your baby the same food as yourself, remember not to add salt or sugar. Honey is not suitable for babies under one. Gradually offer thicker purees and then move on to mashed or chopped foods.

Finger foods can be introduced as soon as your baby starts solid foods; usually babies love the opportunity to start feeding themselves in this way. It's best to start with finger foods that break up easily in their mouth and are long enough to be gripped.



At nursery we are able to provide meals to support your baby as they move through the stages of weaning. Simply discuss with your child's key person.



Further information

Your Health Visitor can advise you further on the amount of breast or formula milk your baby will continue to need each day. In addition to the different foods you can introduce, or need to avoid, to ensure a healthy balanced diet with the correct balance of vitamins and minerals.