

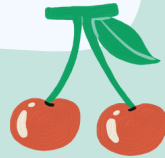
"I'm worried about choking"

I don't think I've met one parent who hasn't felt this way when introducing their baby to solid foods. The main thing to remember, is the difference between gagging and choking.

Gagging is a very normal part of the weaning process. It's your baby's in-built safety mechanism, designed to protect them from choking. Gagging is noisy and they may look red but it isn't unpleasant for them. We know this because they pick the food back up and try again straight-away! If your baby is gagging, don't attempt to fish the food out with your finger- this can push it further back and make things worse.

Choking is serious. Unlike gagging, it is quiet. Your baby's skin, if normally fair, may start to turn blue. It is advisable to read-up on what to do if your baby is choking before starting solids. There are videos online or you could attend a paediatric first aid course.

FAQS



"Can I offer my baby water?"

Yes! Opt for a free-flowing sippy cup or an open topped beaker. If offering juice, dilute to at least 50% and stick to just meal times.

"Does my baby need snacks?"

Nope. Snacks aren't really needed before your baby is 12 months old. After 12 months, stick to healthy choices!

"Can I use commercial baby-food?"

As a general rule, home-cooked food is much better for babies. Baby food jars and pouches can contain lots of sweet ingredients (even in savoury dishes). A little finger food snack box is a great option when you're out and about!

"Is it best to start with savoury tastes?"

Honestly it really doesn't matter! Your baby has already tasted one of the sweetest tasting things out there... breast/ formula milk!

Visit our website for more FAQs & weaning tips!

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A Guide to Introducing Solid Foods to Your Baby



Key Message:
relax &
follow their
lead.

Milk is great!

Babies only start to need more than just milk from 12 months old. That takes quite a bit of the pressure off!
Milk (breast and bottle) is packed full of nutritious goodness that continues to help them grow, even after adding solid food to their diet. Continue to offer milk first when your baby is hungry, followed by solid foods. One key reason for introducing your baby to solid foods before they are 1 year old, is that it's a 6 month (ish) window of opportunity for them to try lots of new textures and tastes before they move into the (slightly pickier!) toddler stage.

Towards 12 months, babies tend to naturally drop some of their milk feeds (usually the mid morning one drops first).

After 1 year old, the WHO recommends continuing breastfeeding until 2 years & beyond. If formula feeding, switch to full-fat cow's milk from 12 months onwards. There are no additional nutritional benefits to follow-on/ toddler formula milks compared to cow's milk.

How do I know when my baby is ready?

There are 3 signs to look out for that show your baby & their body are ready to try solid food. These signs tend to show at around 6 months (different for all babies). It is recommended that you don't start solids with infants under 4 months old.

Can sit up
un-aided

Can pick food up &
accurately put it into their
mouth.

They've lost the tongue
thrust reflex (stopped
spitting things like Calpol
back out).

If you would like to offer food to your baby before they are showing these 3 signs, stick to pureed fruit & vegetables and avoid any allergen foods (meat, dairy, gluten, nuts).

Foods to avoid & cautions

1

No added salt or sugar...

Avoid foods with a high sugar or salt content. Babies should have less than 1g of salt per day. Check labels carefully in the supermarket (some popular children's foods are high in sugar (e.g., fromage frais, rusks). Add salt at the table rather than during cooking.

2

No honey before 12 months old or swordfish/ uncooked shellfish.

3

Stick to full-fat options

Opt for full-fat yoghurts, milks etc. until 2 years old.

4

Choking hazards...

- Avoid whole nuts. Instead offer smooth nut butters or ground nuts (from 6 months +).
- Cut grapes into quarters, lengthways.
- Chop blueberries in half.
- Avoid hard carrot/ apple. Instead, cook until soft.

What's baby-led weaning?

Baby-led weaning is where your baby is the only one to put food into their mouth. Your baby chooses what to eat, and in what order. Babies are excellent at regulating what they eat. Provide the right food and a happy, relaxed meal-time environment & let them do the rest!

What to offer & when...

Pick a time when your baby is in a happy, alert mood to try a little food.

You don't have to start with a particular meal or food and you don't need to stick to a schedule. Often, the best way to start is spontaneously! Let them try a bit of your plate one mealtime and just watch what they do.

3 ways to present food to your baby:

Purees

Includes blended food, yoghurt, custard, mousse, stewed apple etc.

Mashed Food

Includes mashed potato, hummus, dhal, flaky fish, mince...

Finger Foods

Baton shaped cooked carrot, sandwiches, potato, satsuma, toast, pasta. etc,

Big Food

Sometimes, offering a big piece is just easier! E.g., chicken drumstick, melon slice.

You can try a mix! For example, mashed potato is great for picking up peas and pasta is perfect for holding veggie sauces.

Tips for raising a foodie...

Let them explore and play with their food and try things that you don't like.

Avoid wiping their face mid-meal (this is the leading cause of fussy eating!)

Stay away from phrases like, "No pudding until you've eaten your dinner" or, "One more spoon for mummy!" this discourages children from listening to their own body and feelings of fullness. It can also make sweet food feel like a reward... food is just food!

Set a good healthy example!