



where children are celebrated

Feeding and nutrition for under 2s February 2020

How long should I use breast milk?

Breastfeeding is recommended as the sole source of nutrition for babies for about 6 months. When you add solid foods to your baby's diet, continue breastfeeding until at least 12 months. Check with your baby's doctor or health visitor about the recommendations for vitamin D and iron supplements.



When is my baby ready for solid food?

When your baby learns to master the following mealtime milestones, she is likely to be ready, willing and able to start out on her feeding adventure!

1. **Holds her head up high** consistently and for longer periods (usually about 3-4 months)
2. **Can sit up**, albeit with some propping up (usually about 6 months)
3. **Big enough to take it**, roughly when she has doubled his birth weight and weighs about 13 pounds (about 4 months)
4. **Opens wide** in anticipation of food when it comes their way
5. **Moves food from the spoon to her throat** to swallow (if she pushes it out and it dribbles down her chin she may not yet be able to move the food to the back of her throat to swallow it; this is normal and you may need to dilute the food or try again in a couple of weeks)



Finger foods



Once baby can sit up and bring hands and objects to his mouth, he can be given finger foods to encourage self-feeding.

Prevent choking by making sure baby is sitting up, the food is soft, easy to swallow and cut into small pieces (banana, wafer-type biscuits, crackers, scrambled eggs, well-cooked pasta, well-cooked and finely chopped chicken, cut up potatoes or peas).

Do not give your baby food which requires chewing at this stage.

How do I ensure my baby doesn't become a picky eater?

When your baby starts to eat solid foods, be sure to introduce a variety of foods early on.

Give your baby one new food at a time. Generally, meats and vegetables contain more nutrients per serving than fruits or cereals.

Within a few months of starting solid foods, your baby's diet should include a variety of foods, such as breast milk, formula, or both; meats; cereal; vegetables; fruits; eggs; and fish.

If you believe your baby has an allergic reaction to a food, such as diarrhoea, rash or vomiting, talk with your doctor or health visitor.

Limit processed foods (such as jars of baby food) as these often contain more sugar, salt and preservatives than freshly made food.

Freshly made food can be mashed with a fork or put in a blender with no added salt or seasoning.



What should my baby drink?

Healthy babies do not need extra water. Breast milk, formula, or both provide all the fluids they need.

When solid foods are introduced, water can be added, especially in hot weather.

Babies younger than 12 months old do not need juice.

From 1—3 years give only 100% fruit juice (no more than 4 ounces a day) in a cup, not a bottle, to prevent tooth decay.



Get into good habits



Early experiences of social meal times as a family supports good eating habits through life.

Encouraging children to take rests between mouthfuls, stopping when full and eating together from when they are first feeding encourages positive child development.

Remember to offer a good variety of healthy foods that are rich in the nutrients your child needs.

Watch out for sugar!

We all eat much more sugar than we think leading to the risks of being overweight, high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease in later life.

Frequently, sugar in foods is hidden, especially those aimed at children, such as yoghurts, breakfast cereals and ready meals:

250ml orange or apple juice = 6 teaspoons sugar

30g bowl children's cereal = 3 teaspoons sugar

Dried raisins = nearly 100% sugar

1 squirt ketchup = 1 teaspoon sugar

100g pot yoghurt or fromage frais = 3 teaspoons sugar

100g pizza = 2 teaspoons sugar

Tips for cutting down on sugar

Substitute yoghurts, biscuits and cake for unflavoured popcorn, toast fingers, cheese or veg sticks

Offer one or two portions of fruit a day but try to offer low-sugar varieties such as pear, peach, strawberry



And watch out for salt!

Salt is added to many foods we buy so it's easy to eat too much.

Recommended levels of salt are:

Up to 1 year old 1g per day

Up to 4 years old 2g per day

Salt is often labelled as 'sodium' on foods—in this case you need to multiply by 2.5 to get the amount of salt it contains.



Tips for cutting down on salt

Opt for fish or chicken rather than ham, processed meats and sausages

Don't add salt to pasta, potato or vegetable water

Go easy on bought foods such as pizza, fish fingers, sauces and gravies—keep them for occasional treats

Own brands bread, cereal and sauces are often lower in salt and low-salt options of baked beans and ketchup are readily available