

# Starting Solids



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# Overview



- When to start?
- What food to offer?
- Responsive feeding
- Safe feeding practices
- Case Study
- Questions & Ending



# Signs of readiness



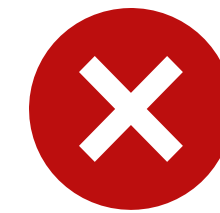
Stay in a sitting position and hold their head up unsupported



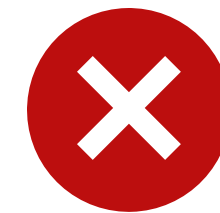
Look at food, pick it up and take it to their mouth by themselves



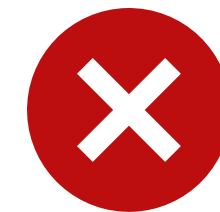
Swallow food (rather than spit it out – more around face than in mouth)



Chewing fists



Wanting extra milk feeds



Waking up in the night (more than usual)



Watching you eat

**These signs usually appear around 6 month (rarely earlier) – All 3 should be in place**

# So, why wait until ~6 months?...



- Breast milk or first infant formula provide the energy and nutrients a baby needs until they're around 6 months old.
- Gives time to develop to be able to cope with solid foods
- Babies have a better ability to feed themselves
- Better at moving food around the mouth, chewing and swallowing



**At around 6 months old babies' digestive and immune systems are ready to cope with solid food.**

# Breastmilk/formula



Keep offering breastfeeds or formula as usual when your baby starts solid foods as this will satisfy your baby's hunger at first. The transition to family foods should be gradual, and breastmilk or first infant formula remain the main source of nutrition until the age of 1 year.



Some babies eat little for the first month or two – this is normal as they learn how to manage solid foods in their mouth and their digestive system adapts gradually.

# What food to offer?

- Between 6 months and 1 year is the best opportunity for babies to get used to lots of **different flavours and textures** and learn to feed themselves.
- Simple **healthy 'family' foods** with no added salt or sugar
- Vegetables, pulses, fruits, eggs, starchy roots, cereals, meat, fish and dairy products should be main components of meals.



Lentils



Raspberries



Carrots



Beef



Avocado



Eggs



Cottage cheese

Smooth



Mashed



Finger food



CAULI-FLOWER

Smooth



Mashed



Finger food



POTATO

Smooth



Mashed



Finger food



EGG

From 6 months

-

Choice of texture

# Iron-rich food

Offer some iron-rich foods every day: Meat, oily fish, pulses, green vegetables, eggs and soy-based foods. For example:



Lentils



Salmon



Eggs



Beef



Tofu



Broccoli



➤ **Babies don't always like a flavour the first time they try it!**



**Offer new foods over  
several occasions**

-

**It can take from 10-20  
exposures before a baby  
accepts a new food**

-

**Pulling a face doesn't  
always mean they don't  
like it**

# Healthy family food



**Teenage/Adult**

25cm



**1-4 year old**

20cm



**7-12 month old**

13cm

It's important to:

- **Involve** babies in family mealtimes
- **Role model** enjoyment of a range of foods, babies learn from us!
- **Be patient**, offer food for babies to eat, but not to force them

# Drinks for babies



## Milk for babies?

- **<12 months – Breastmilk or First-stage infant formula only**
- **12 months and beyond:** breastmilk or whole or semi-skimmed cow's milk or an unsweetened calcium-enriched alternative milk or water, should be their main drink.
- There is **no nutritional need** for babies to have 'follow-on' formula.
- **No rice milk** for children under 5 years



Babies can be offered water to drink from 6 months old. A small baby cup or an open-handled/free-flow cup can be encouraged at mealtimes



*Parents should be encouraged to brush a baby's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears.*

# Responsive Feeding

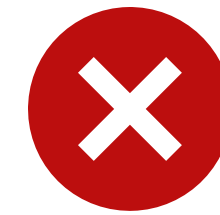


**What could happen if we continue to encourage babies to carry on eating when they are full?**



## Signs of hunger

- Picking up food and putting in mouth
- Holding hand out for food
- Excited body language
- Leaning towards food and opening mouth
- Excited body language



## Signs of fullness

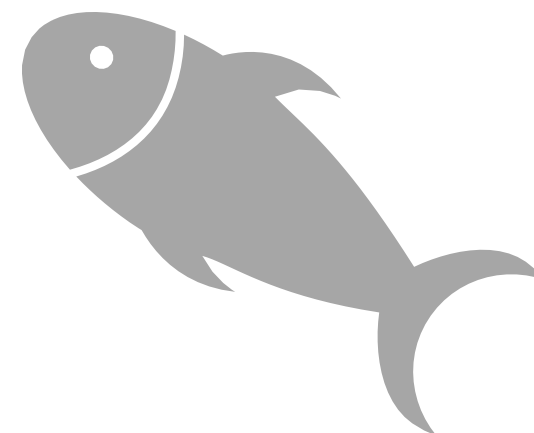
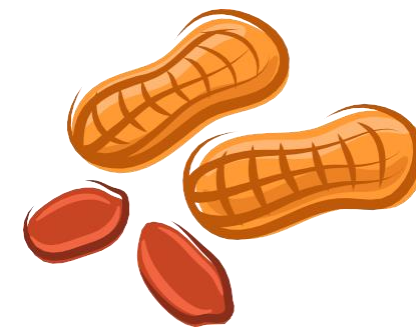
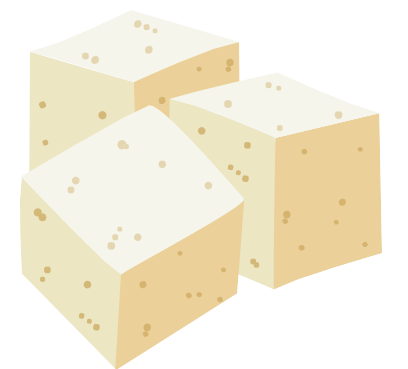
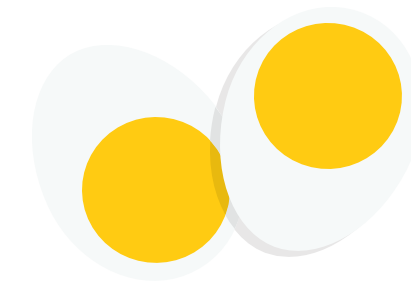
- Turning away
- Shutting mouth
- Spitting food out
- Pushing food or spoon away
- Slowing down in eating

# Risk of Allergies



From six months, introduce the foods that are more likely to trigger an allergic reactions one at a time and in small amounts so that you can spot any reaction

- Cow's milk
- Eggs
- Wheat, barley and rye
- Nuts and peanuts
- Seeds
- Soya
- Fish and Shellfish



# Safe feeding practices



Gagging is a normal reflex to help prevent babies from choking

One of parents' biggest worries when introducing solids is **choking**.

- Babies gag reflex is further forward in their mouth, meaning they will gag, cough and make noises when they start to eat foods. This is NORMAL!
- Ensure baby is 6 months and showing the 3 signs of readiness
- Food should be prepared safely and with awareness of what could be a choking hazard
- Ensure baby is not left unsupervised whilst eating



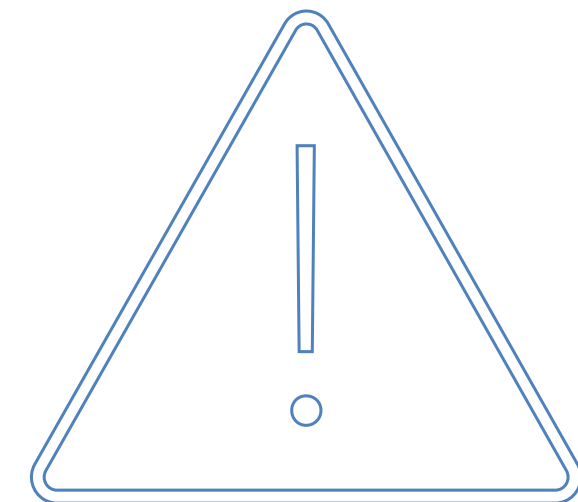
Via YouTube: British Red Cross

**Gagging**  $\neq$  **Choking**

# Food and drink to avoid in the first year



- Salty foods/added salt
- Added sugar and sugary snacks and drinks including fruit juice, smoothies, squash, flavoured milk as well as caffeinated drinks
- Honey
- Foods that may be a choking risk – peanuts, grapes, hard cheese, whole nuts
- Certain Fish
- Some cheeses
- Processed foods
- Low calorie foods
- High fibre foods



# Older Babies



- Continue to build on exploring texture, giving plenty of opportunities to chew, and enjoy family mealtimes!
- As time goes on and your baby eats more solids, they may naturally want less breast milk or first infant formula.
- **By 1 year:** 3 meals a day and 2 nutritious snacks. You can continue to breastfeed as much as mother and baby want.





# What about supplements?



- All children aged 6 months to 5 years should take a daily vitamin supplements containing vitamins A, C and D (unless drinking at least 500ml of formula a day).
- The Healthy Start scheme allows eligible families to purchase healthy food
- In Tower Hamlets, families can pick up free Healthy Start Vitamins in Children's Centres.



# Top tips for parents



There's no right or wrong way – some parents prefer baby-led to spoon feeding, while others combine a bit of both.

There is no set portion guide for under 1's. Follow baby's cues and remember they do not need much food at first.

Follow baby's cues – Continue with responsive feeding

Provide simple real foods and serve appropriately – soft sticks of food.

Create relaxed mealtimes that provide opportunity for you to connect with baby. Eye contact and interactions at mealtimes can reassure and encourage.

Expect some mess! Getting hands-on with food is one of the ways babies learn about this new experience. Covering the floor with a sheet of plastic can make clearing up easier!

# Case Study



**You are undertaking a consultation for a 16-week-old baby. During the consultation, the parent informs you that they want to know more about introducing solids. They also express that they feel their baby is ready to start solid foods because they are continually waking up in the night for extra feeds and showing a lot of interest in the food that the family is eating.**

- How would you respond to this situation?
- Is there any guidance that could be provided?
- What sources of information or support could this parent be signposted to?



# Useful Links



- [Weaning - Start for Life](#)
- [Your baby's first solid foods – NHS](#)
- [First Steps Nutrition – Eating well in the first year](#)
- [Eating well: 6 months to 2 years for South Asian Children](#)
- [British Nutrition Foundation](#)
  
- Watch our animated '[Solid Foods](#)' video from Care Confident available in both English and Bengali.

# Thank you!



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