A simple guide to starting your baby on solid foods
### Baby's Skills

**Beginning**
- From birth
  - Sucking reflex
  - Rooting reflex
  - Crying

**Discovering tastes, smells and feel of food**
- Sociable
- Eye-hand co-ordination
- More alert
- Watching others feed
- Good head control

**Before ready for weaning at six months**
- Sitting
- Holding small objects
- Chewing, tongue moving food around mouth
- Taking food off spoon
- Indicating “No”

**Family Food**
- From six months
  - Ability to self feed with a spoon
  - Growing understanding of social skills

**1 year**
- Ability to self feed with a spoon
- Growing understanding of social skills

### What food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baby's Skills</th>
<th>What food</th>
<th>When to feed</th>
<th>How to feed</th>
<th>Milk</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>When hungry</td>
<td>Breast, Cup, Bottle</td>
<td>Breast, Formula – how much? 2½ ounces per lb body weight in 24 hours (150ml/kg of body weight)</td>
<td>• All solid foods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discovering</td>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>When hungry</td>
<td>Breast, Cup, Bottle</td>
<td>Breast, Formula – how much? 2½ ounces per lb body weight in 24 hours (150ml/kg of body weight) e.g. a 10lb baby needs 25 ounces of milk in 24 hours</td>
<td>• Sugar, Salt, Dairy products, Eggs, Shellfish, Honey, Wheat (gluten), Juices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociable</td>
<td>Tastes from your plate. Hard finger foods e.g. large celery sticks, raw carrot to suck and taste</td>
<td>When you eat</td>
<td>From baby's hand or a clean finger</td>
<td>• Breast - baby led - Formula after food - 1 pint/ 600ml/ 20 ounces per day as drink or in food</td>
<td>• Sugar, Salt, Nuts, Honey, Soft cooked eggs, Juiices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eye-hand co-ordination</td>
<td>Lumps of food Vegetables, salad, fruit, cereals, lean meat, fish, pulses, yoghurt, cheese, bread, pasta</td>
<td>Family mealtimes</td>
<td>Breast, Cup, Bottle</td>
<td>• Full fat cow’s milk In a cup without a spout</td>
<td>• Salt, Sugar, Whole nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More alert</td>
<td>Three meals a day and two snacks</td>
<td>Finger food, Spoon</td>
<td>Self-feed with hand or spoon</td>
<td>• Salt, Sugar, Whole nuts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Watching others feed</td>
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### Why start at six months?
At six months old babies have the skills to feed themselves. Their intestines and kidneys have matured and they are less likely to be fussy about foods.

### What to offer
Your baby can eat the same foods as the rest of the family, apart from those listed as ‘Avoid’ on this chart. Try things like:
- Mashed food
- Bite-sized pieces of lumpy food, e.g. vegetables
- Allowing baby to choose foods themselves

It is cheaper to make your baby's meals yourself, and you then know exactly what's in them.
What shall I give my baby to drink?

Milk and cooled boiled water are all that your baby needs to drink.

Don’t give sugary drinks, such as fruit juices, as these can damage your baby’s teeth.

Brush your baby’s teeth at least twice a day.

Low fat & high fibre foods

Low fat foods and high fibre foods are not suitable for children under two years of age.

Children need to have plenty of calories and goodness from a wide variety of foods to make sure they grow properly. Full fat foods like milks, cheeses, yoghurt and butter/margarine are good sources of energy for your baby. Remember to limit foods and drinks containing sugar and salt though.

Start introducing adult healthy eating from the age of two years by increasing fibre and reducing fat.

How do I spot constipation?

Constipation is the passing of very hard poo. Baby’s poo can change with the start of new foods.

- Extra water to drink will help
- Giving a variety of foods helps but do not give too much fibre

These are not long-term remedies. If it does not get better then tell your Doctor.

What about additives?

Fresh food without additives is best, so try to choose food without artificial colours and preservatives.

- If you have allergies in your family and are concerned about weaning, speak with your Health Visitor or Doctor. They may recommend that you see a Dietitian
- Always read food labels

Safe eating

There are some important safety and hygiene tips to remember.

- Wash your hands and baby’s hands before handling food
- Sterilise bottles and teats if used for milk
- It’s best to strap baby securely into a high chair to avoid accidents
- Any plates, cups, etc. used should always be washed and rinsed well after use

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