A simple guide to starting your baby on solid foods
Your baby can eat the same foods as the rest of the family, apart from those listed as ‘Avoid’ on the chart over the page. For example:

- Mashed food
- Bite-sized pieces of lumpy food, e.g. vegetables
- Allow baby to choose foods themselves

It is cheaper to make your baby’s meals yourself, and you also know exactly what’s in it!

What is weaning?

Weaning is the name given to the introduction of solid foods, and the best time to start this is when your baby is six months old.

Why start at six months?

At six months 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

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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.
<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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning</strong></td>
<td>• Sucking reflex • Rooting reflex • Crying</td>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>When hungry</td>
<td>• Breast • Cup • Bottle</td>
<td>• Breast • Formula – how much? 21/2 fluid ounces per lb body weight in 24 hours (150ml/kg of body weight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From birth</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discovering</strong></td>
<td>Sociable • Eye-hand coordination • More alert • Watching others feed • Good head control</td>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>When hungry</td>
<td>• Breast • Cup • Bottle</td>
<td>• Breast • Formula – how much? 21/2 fluid 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tastes, smells</strong></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></td>
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<td><strong>and feel of food</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Before ready for weaning at six months</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family Food</strong></td>
<td>Sitting • Holding small objects • Chewing, tongue moving food around mouth • Taking food off spoon • Indicating “No”</td>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Family mealtimes</td>
<td>• Breast • Cup • Bottle</td>
<td>• Breast - baby led • Formula \textit{after food} - 1 pint/ 600ml/ 20 fluid ounces per day as drink or in food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From six months</strong></td>
<td>Lumps of food • Vegetables, salad, fruit, cereals, lean meat, fish, pulses, yoghurt, cheese, bread, pasta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Three meals a day and two snacks</td>
<td>• Finger food • Spoon</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability to self feed with a spoon</strong></td>
<td>Family meals chopped up</td>
<td>Family mealtimes</td>
<td>Self-feed with hand or spoon</td>
<td>• Full fat cow’s milk • In a cup without a spout</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Growing understanding of social skills</strong></td>
<td>Tap water in an open cup</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Low fat and 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. But remember to limit foods and drinks containing sugar and salt.

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

How do I know if my baby is constipated?

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 tell your Doctor.

What about additives in foods and drinks?

Fresh food, without additives, is best. 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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