UNDERSTANDING HOW BABIES’ NEEDS CHANGE

Between the ages of 6 months and two years, your baby’s nutritional needs are quite different to those of older children and adults. Although all the nutrients your baby needs are usually obtained by giving a varied diet, sometimes it’s difficult to guarantee the correct balance. This booklet has been designed to help you understand your baby’s growing needs from 4 months right up to her 2nd birthday, as well as offering practical information and handy tips on how to meet them.
Your baby and iron

Your baby is born with a store of iron but by around 4-6 months of age this is used up and it is essential that she obtains all the iron she needs from her diet. However, during, and even after weaning, it can be difficult for some babies to get their recommended intake of iron from the amount of food they eat.

What's so important about iron?

Iron is important for your baby's brain development, especially between 6 months and 2 years. A deficiency of iron during the early years may have a profound influence on learning later in life.

A short-term lack of iron can lead to iron deficiency where the iron stores are depleted. If this deficiency is prolonged, it may result in iron deficiency anaemia, which is a more serious condition when the body does not have enough iron to make normal red blood cells needed for optimum brain development.

In the United Kingdom, iron deficiency anaemia is the most commonly reported nutritional problem during early childhood. In fact, surveys have shown that 1 in every 5 babies aged 10-12 months have daily intakes of iron below the desired level.²

²Department of Health COMA report on Weaning and the Weaning Diet. HMSO 1994: 43
²NHY: Food and Nutrition intake of British infants Aged 0-12 Months survey (1982)
Which other nutrients are important?

As your baby is rapidly growing and developing, in addition to iron, there are other nutrients which are particularly important during this time which you should include within your baby’s diet:

**Calcium**

This is essential to help build strong, healthy bones and teeth. It also helps the heart, nerves, muscles and other body systems to work properly.

**Vitamin D**

Essential for the proper use of calcium and phosphorous which are needed for the formation and maintenance of healthy bones and teeth.

**Zinc**

This helps to boost the immune system and speeds the healing of wounds.

**Vitamin A**

This is important for normal growth and development, particularly your baby’s eyes. It also helps maintain healthy skin, teeth and bones.

**Vitamin C**

This helps the body to absorb iron from iron rich foods.
Should I give my baby vitamin supplements?

In the UK, the Department of Health recommends that from 6 months if your baby is being breast fed or is drinking less than 500 ml of infant formula or follow-on milk a day, you should discuss giving your baby vitamin supplements with your health visitor or public health nurse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Nutrients</th>
<th>Which foods can you find them in?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calcium</td>
<td>Cheese, yoghurt, broccoli, cabbages, grains, canned sardines*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and salmon, tofu, white bread, cows' milk, SMA Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vitamin D</td>
<td>Cod liver oil, tippers*, mackerel*, eggs*, margarine,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SMA Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc</td>
<td>Red meats, pulses, whole grains, tofu, cooked greens,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mushrooms, grain beans, pumpkin seeds, SMA Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A</td>
<td>Liver, butter, cheese, eggs*, margarine,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spinach, carrots, broccoli, apricots*, tomatoes, SMA Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin C</td>
<td>Citrus fruits, strawberries, lentil fruit, cabbage, broccoli,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sprouts, cauliflower, peas, potatoes, SMA Progress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Eggs and liver should be eaten select leaving, as they may contain poisons and dried fruits may cause choking.
*Ensure that egg yolks and whites are fully cooked.
On to solids

Your baby's first solid food should be bland, easy to digest and unlikely to cause an allergic reaction. For this reason, baby rice is ideal. After that, foods should then start as smooth purées (e.g. fruit or vegetables) and gradually get chunkier in texture, becoming almost chopped-up mini adult meals by 9-12 months. See the guide to texture and recipe suggestions opposite.

First weaning foods

Fruit or vegetable purée

Peel 250 g (9 oz) of the vegetable or fruit and steam or boil in a little water until soft (do not add any salt or sugar). Once soft, drain and add 95 ml (3.4 fl oz) baby's usual milk, i.e. breast/formula milk. Purée using a fork or hand blender. To make a thicker consistency, mix baby rice together with the purée and stir until thoroughly combined.

Purée Ideas

- Bananas
- Peas
- Apples
- Avocado
- Carrots
- Pumpkin
- Sweet potatoes

Note: use your healthcare professional.
Clever Combos

Why not try mixing 2 different fruits or vegetables to add variety and introduce new tastes?

Banana and avocado
A quick and tasty meal and no need to cook

Carrot and butternut squash
Sweet root vegetables baby will enjoy

Potato and broccoli
A tried and tested favourite

Lentil purée with carrots
30 g (1 oz) red, split lentils
50 g (2 oz) carrots – peeled and chopped
300 ml (1/2 pt) baby’s usual milk, i.e. breast/formula milk

Simmer lentils in a covered saucepan for
30 minutes along with the carrots and baby’s usual milk, until soft.
Liquidise to a smooth consistency.
What about milk?

Milk contains energy and nutrients that are essential to healthy development, and that's why it is recommended that you continue to give your child milk until she is at least five years old.

Cows' milk should not be introduced as a drink until at least 1 year and there is now research that shows it may be beneficial to wait until your child is two years old. This is mainly because cows' milk is very low in iron, which is an essential nutrient for your baby's growth and development. It is also low in the important vitamins C and D and has high levels of saturated fat and sodium.

Semi-skimmed milk should not be introduced before 2 years of age, and then only if your child is eating well, as it is low in energy which your child needs for growth. Skimmed milk should not be introduced before 5 years because it is even lower in energy.
Can I give my toddler a follow-on milk?

Follow-on milks, like SMA Progress, are specially formulated to meet your growing toddler's extra nutritional demands and can be given right up until they're two years old. In fact, you may prefer to give your toddler Progress rather than switch to cows' milk as it contains more iron, which is very important for toddlers, and the right amount of vitamin C to help them absorb the iron.

As your toddler's appetite increases, you may notice she's drinking less milk. Progress contains all the important nutrients she needs in a smaller amount of milk, to ensure she still has an appetite for solid food.

**SMA PROGRESS**
- Complements a varied weaning diet and helps older babies and toddlers meet their nutritional needs.
- When given alongside solid food, just 350 ml a day provides the iron, zinc and vitamins C and D your toddler needs.
- Available in convenient sachets of powder and cartons of ready-to-use liquid.
- Easily incorporated into your toddler's diet as a drink, added to cereals or mixed in with food.
- Suitable for vegetarians.