Introducing your baby to solid foods, often called weaning, should start when your baby is around 6 months old. It’s a really important step in your baby’s development and it can be great fun to explore new flavours and textures together. This booklet is here to help guide you through this exciting time, so you can be sure you’re giving your baby a healthy start in life.

To begin with, how much your baby takes is less important than getting them used to the idea of eating. They will still be getting most of their nutrition from milk. Babies don’t need three meals a day to start with, so you can start by offering foods at a time that suits you both.

Gradually, you’ll be able to increase the amount and variety of food your baby eats until they can eventually eat the same as the rest of the family, in smaller portions.

What is Start4Life?
Start4Life is an initiative to help you give your baby a healthier start in life. There are 6 Start4Life building blocks, based on the latest infant health research.

The Start4Life building blocks

Look after you too
Looking after yourself can help you and your family feel better and healthier too

Don’t forget the development checks and immunisations
Being immunised is the best way to protect them and their checks will ensure they are developing healthily

Get going every day
Being active every day is important for little ones, so they can grow stronger, bigger and stay healthy

Taste for life
How giving your baby a variety of food now will help them get into good eating habits

No rush to mush
3 signs that your baby is ready to start on solid foods

Mum’s milk
Why mums are the baby milk experts

No rush to mush
Starting at around 6 months
The latest research by the World Health Organization shows that babies can get all the nutrients they need from breast milk or infant formula until they are around 6 months old. This gives a baby’s digestive system time to develop so that they can cope fully with solid foods. This includes solid food made into purees and cereals added to milk.

Why it pays to wait until they’re ready
If you are breastfeeding, feeding only mum’s milk up to around 6 months will give your baby extra protection against infection, and it will continue to protect them for as long as you carry on.

Whether your baby has mum’s milk or infant formula, waiting till your baby is ready for food will save a lot of time too, as they will quickly be able to feed themselves and with less mess, as they’ll be able to swallow properly.

Other Headings

3 Signs Your Baby is Ready
Signs Mistaken for Being Ready
First Foods First!
Getting Started
Top Tips to Encourage
Things to Watch
Sweet as They Are

www.nhs.uk/weaning