

MOVING ONTO FAMILY MEALS

Stage 3 Lumps, Chopped Foods and Finger Foods

Your baby will now be taking a wide variety of flavours and textures of food. Your baby should be eating mostly the same foods as the rest of the family. Try and eat together as a family. At about the ages of 9 months to 1 year your baby will develop further the ability to chew, even if the teeth haven't come through yet. Continue to offer foods with a lumpy texture and finger foods.

When introducing coarser foods it is a good idea to use a food that is already enjoyed. Try mixing a little of the coarser food into the normal minced or mashed food when you first try. Gradually you will be able to increase the chopped food and reduce the minced or mashed food.

You can still cook and freeze baby's meals for convenience.

REGULAR MEALS

Your baby should always be encouraged to take three (or four) regular meals. Offering fatty snacks and sweet foods, such as crisps, sweets and chocolate, between meals can spoil your baby's appetite. These are much better as a treat. However, unsweetened drinks may be given when required. These should be taken from a cup at this stage. If your baby does become hungry between meals, offer the following snacks:-

Piece of fruit or vegetable

Fingers of bread or toast with savoury topping

Savoury or plain biscuit, e.g. cracker, digestive, breadstick, rich tea biscuit.....

½ Bread muffin or teacake, malt loaf, or fingers of pitta bread, or rice cakes

MILK

Continue with breast or formula milk until your baby is at least 1 year of age. Whole cow's milk can be used in cooking, e.g. in custard, sauces and with cereals.

Whole cow's milk can be used as main drink after 1 year of age. From 1 until 5 years of age, one pint of milk daily should be encouraged. This includes milk used on cereals, in cooking and foods made from milk e.g. milk puddings, custard, yogurt, fromage frais, cheese and sauces. Lower fat milk can be used in cooking after 1 year, but not as a main drink. Semi-skimmed milk can be used as a main drink after 2 years as long as your child is growing well and eats a wide variety of foods. Skimmed milk should not be used before the age of 5 years.

EGGS

All eggs should be well cooked until the white and yolk are solid for infants under 1 year of age, due to the risk of salmonella food poisoning. Dishes which contain raw, uncooked or partially cooked egg, should be avoided until 1 year of age.

CHEESE

Hard cheese (e.g. Cheddar) can be cubed or grated and used as a "finger food" or in sauces.

SPREADS

Use small amounts of butter or margarine, e.g. on bread/toast.

NUTS

Whole nuts should not be given to children until 5 years of age because of the risk of choking. Finely ground nuts (i.e. smooth peanut or other nut butters) can be used from 6 months (26 weeks) of age. If your baby has known allergies, such as eczema, asthma, hayfever and rhinitis, or there is a family history of allergy, then all nuts should be avoided until 3 years of age.

SALT

Salt and salty foods e.g. stock cubes, yeast extract, should only be added to food in small and weak amounts, e.g. very diluted. Try and discourage crisps and other salty snacks.

SUGAR

Sugar should not be added to food except tart/sour fruit e.g. stewed cooking apple, as this may cause tooth decay and cause your child to become overweight.

STARCHY FOODS

Encourage wholewheat products e.g. bread, cereal and discourage foods with added sugar (biscuits, cakes etc.)

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Use fruit and vegetables five times in a day.

VITAMINS

From 6 months (26 weeks) onwards vitamin drops should be given to:-

- breast fed babies
- bottle fed babies if the amount of formula taken is less than 500mls (17fl.oz) per day

Your health visitor can give you more information on the use of vitamin drops.

FEEDING THEMSELVES

As babies begin to take more lumpy and finger foods they may want to feed themselves. Let them try by giving them a spoon whilst you are feeding them. Their skills in using the spoon will probably take quite some time to develop. Also continue to provide finger foods. If you are worried about mess, cover the floor below baby's highchair.

USING A CUP

At this stage you can try offering drinks from a cup at lunchtime and between meals. Use a beaker with a spout and two firm handles and introduce to your baby gradually. Use unsweetened orange juice with meals, especially if diet is meat free. Fruit juice should be diluted 1 part fruit juice to 6 parts water. Aim for about 4-6 small cups of drink a day.

By this stage, your baby's diet should be becoming mixed, varied and more like your family meals. Your baby should be encouraged to take lumpy foods of different textures.

USING WHOLEMEAL FOODS

Wholemeal bread and wholegrain cereals are essential in a well balanced diet. These foods should be encouraged. Your baby can be given these but take care to choose a fine textured wholemeal bread. Weetabix is best offered mixed with porridge or Ready Brek.

REMEMBER:

**NEVER LEAVE BABIES ALONE
WHILE THEY ARE TRYING HARD
FOODS OR FEEDING THEMSELVES**

SUGGESTED MEAL PLAN FOR A 9 MONTH OLD UP TO 1 YEAR OLD INFANT

Breakfast

Cereal - porridge or Weetabix or Readybrek with full fat cow's milk
or

Egg (hard boiled, poached or scrambled)
(Egg must be cooked until yolk is hard) with a finger of wholemeal toast

Cup or beaker of formula milk or breast feed

Dinner

Minced or chopped meat or fish or pulses
Mashed or chopped vegetables
Mashed potatoes or rice or pasta

Chopped soft fresh or stewed fruit, fromage frais, full fat yogurt or milky pudding

Cup or beaker of diluted pure unsweetened fruit juice or water

Tea

Savoury dish:- meat dish, fish dish, egg dish, cheese dish (grated mild cheese or cottage cheese) or vegetable dish or pulse dish
Fingers of bread or chapatti

Chopped soft fresh fruit

Breast feed or cup or beaker of formula milk

Bedtime

Breast or bottle feed

IN CONCLUSION - for 9 months up to 1 year

Practical tips to note at this age:

- Food should be now be finely chopped.
- Homemade or low sugar rusks are useful finger foods. See how to make homemade rusks in Mealtimes Become More Important.
Also use fingers of fruit, vegetables, toast.
- Use a feeding beaker or cup for drinks.
- Use family foods without sugar and salt.
- A small amount of mild spices, e.g. coriander and cumin, can be used in baby's food.
- Remember vitamin drops.
- Remember to include iron rich foods in your baby's menu.

e.g. meat
 hard cooked egg
 beans and pulses
 dark green leafy vegetables
 fortified breakfast cereals e.g. Weetabix

SUGGESTED PLAN FROM 1 YEAR ONWARDS**Breakfast**

Cereal or porridge with milk
 Piece of wholemeal toast
 Diluted unsweetened fruit juice

Mid-morning

Milk or water

Lunch

Meat, fish, egg or cheese dish or pulse dish
 Vegetables
 Potato or bread or rice or pasta or chapatti
 Fresh fruit, yogurt, fromage frais, milk pudding, stewed fruit and custard
 Diluted pure unsweetened fruit juice or water

Mid-afternoon

Water or fresh fruit

Tea time

Finger foods - fingers of toast with savoury topping or baked beans or sandwiches
 or pieces of cheese, tomato with bread
 Pudding as lunchtime
 Cup of milk

Bedtime

Cup of milk

IN CONCLUSION - from 1 year onwards

Points to note:

- Your child should now be **eating with the family**.
- Stick to **savoury snacks** - vegetables, crackers, plain biscuits, toast or bread, pitta bread, pieces of fruit, teacakes, bread muffins, malt loaf.
- Discourage high fat foods like crisps, pastry.
- Diluted fruit juice or water for drinks.
- Encourage unsweetened fruit if vegetables are rejected.
- Remember young children need approximately 1 pint whole milk daily.
- Remember vitamin drops.
- Liver paté and soft cheese, e.g. Brie, Camembert, may be taken after 1 year of age.

DRINKS

As your child reaches 1 year, sugar-containing drinks should still be confined to mealtimes. All drinks should be used as dilute as possible.

From 1 year of age, feeding from a bottle should be strongly discouraged. By the time a child is taking a mixture of foods, cups or beakers should be used for drinks.

VITAMINS

It is recommended that all babies are given vitamin drops from 1 year of age and preferably up to 5 years. Other vitamin preparations, e.g. tablets, should not be used unless under medical supervision.