

FEEDING THE VEGETARIAN BABY

This is a guide for parents who wish to bring their child up on a lacto-ovo vegetarian diet (a diet which includes eggs, milk and milk products).

STARTING SOLIDS – FIRST TASTES (6 months)

Breast feeding provides all the nutrition your baby needs for the first six months (26 weeks) of life. If you choose not to breast feed, infant formula is a safe alternative and provides all the nutrition your baby needs. You need not rush to give solids before 6 months. If you do decide to give solids earlier, do not start them before 4 months (17 weeks) of age. If there is a family history of eczema, asthma, hayfever or food allergy, it is even more important not to wean your baby before 4 months of age.

The introduction of solids too early can increase the risk of infections and development of allergies.

For more detailed information on how to introduce first tastes to your baby, please ask your health visitor for the general information leaflet, **First Tastes** (this is also available on the Leicestershire Nutrition and Dietetic Service's website at www.lnds.nhs.uk)

First foods should have a smooth consistency and bland taste. These can be mixed with cooled boiled water, expressed breast milk or infant formula.

Suitable first foods include:-

- **Cereals**

Always choose a baby cereal that **does not contain added sugar**. Baby rice is best to begin with. To add flavour, use a little pureed fruit or vegetable. Wheat products like rusks and Weetabix, and foods containing gluten are best avoided until after 6 months of age.

- **Vegetables**

Vegetables are good first weaning foods – potato, carrot, parsnip and swede are best to start with.

A small portion of cooked vegetable can be taken from the family meal and puréed. **Remember not to add any salt before cooking.** Milk or a cheese sauce can be combined with pureed vegetables to improve the consistency for your baby.

- **Fruit**

A little **unsweetened** stewed and puréed fruit, such as apple, pear or banana, can be given.

- **Cheese**

Cheese may be given from 4 months in sauces. From 6 months, cottage cheese or grated cheese can be added to baby rice or mixed with pureed vegetables.

- **Eggs**

Eggs can be introduced from 6 months but must be well cooked until both the yolk and white of the egg are hard.

- **Pulses**

Beans, peas and lentils can be introduced from 6 months. Ensure they are cooked until soft before pureeing.

- **Yogurts / Fromage Frais**

Fruit yogurts contain sugar should be avoided as they will encourage a taste for sweet foods. Natural unsweetened full cream (not low fat) yogurt or fromage frais can be added to fruit or vegetables such as stewed apple, mashed banana, pureed tomato or pureed carrot. Yogurt can also be added to baby rice.

- **Nuts**

Finely ground nuts and smooth peanut butter or other nut spreads may be given from 6 months. **Whole nuts should not be given until 5 years of age due to the risk of choking.** If there is a family history of allergy, such as eczema, asthma, hayfever or rhinitis, it is recommended that **introduction of nuts and nut products should be delayed until 3 years of age.**

- **Salt and Sugar**

Don't be tempted to add salt or sugar (including honey and glucose) to your baby's food. Babies can't taste the difference yet and foods that you may think are tasteless will be perfectly acceptable to them. Your baby's kidneys cannot function as well as your own, so too much salt could be harmful. Also avoid using salty foods such as Marmite, Vegemite and stock cubes at this young age.

MEAL TIMES BECOME MORE IMPORTANT – AFTER YOUR BABY HAS BECOME FAMILIAR WITH FIRST FOODS

The variety of foods given can now be increased. The texture of food given can begin to progress from pureed to a more lumpy consistency, continuing towards mashed / minced foods and finally to foods being finely chopped.

As more solids are eaten, the amount of breast or formula milk will gradually reduce. ***It is recommended that you should continue to use breast milk or infant formula for your baby until 1 year of age.***

Foods you can now offer your baby include:

- Breakfast cereals e.g. Readybrek, porridge, Weetabix.
- Bread, bread sticks.
- Cooked pasta.
- Cooked rice.
- Savoury biscuits.
- A wide variety of vegetables.
- Pulse vegetables well cooked in a tomato or other savoury sauce or pureed baked beans given with a starchy food, eg rice, bread or potato.
- Finely ground nuts or smooth nut butters, **NOT** whole nuts before 5 years of age, as young children can choke on these.
- Grated or chopped fresh or stewed fruit, including cooked dried fruits such as dates and apricots.
- Yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese and eggs.
- Soya mince, quorn, tofu.

Finger foods can be offered at this age – many of the above foods are suitable.

Iron

This is an important mineral to consider at 6-9 months of age.

During the first few months of your baby's life either breast milk or infant milk provides all the nourishment needed. Your baby was born with his/her own iron store, but by the age of 6 months this store has started to decrease. ***It is especially important to give a variety of foods rich in iron if your child will not be eating meat.***

Iron is essential for healthy blood and normal growth and development. Babies grow very quickly at this age and insufficient iron may slow down these important processes.

- ⊕ Avoid giving coarse-textured wholegrain cereals, such as Swiss style breakfast cereals or coarse textured wholemeal bread. These foods contain phytates which bind with important minerals like iron, stopping them from being used by the body.
- ☺ Foods rich in Vitamin C increase the amount of iron absorbed. Vitamin C is found in fruit, vegetables and fruit juices.
- ⊕ Some high fibre foods, like unprocessed bran, contain substances that reduce iron absorption, therefore high fibre cereals should only be given in small quantities. However, foods such as fine grain wholemeal bread are suitable.
Unprocessed bran should not be given to babies or toddlers.
- ⊕ Tea can reduce iron absorption too. It should be avoided at this age.
- ☺ Ensure milk intake is reduced as solids increase. Aim for no more than 1 pint per day. Offering more than this can reduce your baby's appetite for solid food.

Good sources of iron in the vegetarian diet are:-

Eggs

These may be given from 6 months of age and should be cooked until both yolk and white are firm.

Pulses

Peas, dried and canned beans, lentils.

Vegetables Especially dark green leafy vegetables, eg spinach, peas, green beans and cabbage, and tomato purée.

Breakfast Cereals Many breakfast cereals are fortified with iron. Check the labels.

Commercial Foods Look out for iron-fortified foods, for example iron - fortified HP spaghetti shapes eg Postman Pat, Thomas the Tank Engine. Noddy crisps. Some soft grain breads are also fortified with vitamins and iron.

Follow on milk formulae

These are enriched with iron and may be useful in certain situations where iron intake may be low e.g. some fussy eaters and in children who are vegetarian. (These formulae are not recommended for babies under 6 months of age).

Try to include a variety of foods in your baby's diet, ensuring you give items from the above list daily. This is essential to achieve an adequate intake of iron. For further information about iron refer to the leaflet 'Iron – an essential mineral' available from www.lnds.nhs.uk

MOVING ON TO FAMILY MEALS (9-12 months)

At this stage your baby will be eating three meals a day. Most of the foods the family are having will be suitable. Encourage a variety of foods, flavours and textures.

To ensure a healthy diet, try to provide **one food from each of the following groups at each main meal:-**

1. Cheese – cottage, curd or hard }
Yogurt } use full fat varieties
Milk } of these foods
2. Lentils, split peas, beans or ground / puréed nuts. } have one of
Quorn, soya, tofu } these at 2
Eggs } meals each day
3. Breakfast cereals, bread, potato, rice pasta, chapattis
4. Fruit, fruit juice, vegetables

DRINKS

It is surprising how many people think that a baby cries only from hunger or discomfort. Babies do get thirsty, especially in warm weather, so between feeds offer a drink of plain water which has been boiled and then cooled. This can be given in a bottle / feeding cup or on a teaspoon.

It is not necessary to flavour this water, but some natural unsweetened apple juice or orange juice may be added if desired. This should be very dilute (1 part fruit juice to 5 parts water). Some commercial baby drinks have high sugar or glucose content. These are best avoided. To reduce the risk of dental problems introduce your baby to a cup from 6 months of age and offer juice preferably at mealtimes only.

Cow's Milk as a drink

<u>Type</u>	<u>Suitable age</u>
Whole (full cream)	- from 12 months up to 2 years
Semi-skimmed	- can gradually be introduced from 2 years if your child is eating well
Skimmed	- fully skimmed milk is not suitable as a main drink for a young child until they are 5 years old

Aim for 1 pint (600ml) milk each day.

If your child does not like milk, it is important to ensure that they are still getting adequate calcium in their diet. As a guide, you can substitute other dairy products as follows:

150g pot of yogurt	=	1/3 pint milk (200ml)
1oz cheese	=	1/3 pint milk (200ml)

(matchbox size)

Other milks

Goat's milk or sheep's milk should **not** be given to babies under 1 year of age as they are not nutritionally complete.

Soya milk in a carton is also **unsuitable for infants**. A soya-based baby milk formula should only be used for a diagnosed cow's milk intolerance, or in a vegan diet.

RECIPES

The following recipes will help you plan meals and add variety to your baby's diet. They give the age range, for which the recipe is suitable. You can adapt the consistency of your own vegetarian recipes as well, and remove a portion before it is seasoned, to give to your baby.

STAGE 1 - FIRST TASTES

This section includes recipes to tempt your baby into moving on from milk to solid food. In the early stages you will find your baby may only require small quantities - portion sizes are a guide only as babies' appetites vary.

You may find your baby only requires one course at this age, savoury at lunchtime and fruity one at teatime

CREAMY PUREE (8-12 Portions)

75g (3oz) of cooked vegetables
2-3 teaspoons baby rice
175ml (6fl oz) warm formula milk or full cream cow's milk

Purée or sieved the cooked vegetables. Mix the baby rice into the warm milk (vary the amount of rice depending on how thick your baby likes it). Stir the baby rice mixture into the puréed vegetables.

Serve to your baby

- Freeze the remaining mixture into ice cube trays for use on another day.

VEGETABLES WITH BABY CEREAL (8 portions)

¼ small onion, peeled
1 courgette
2 florets of broccoli
1 medium carrot, peeled and sliced
25g (1oz) green cabbage, shredded
3 tablespoons baby rice

Chop all the vegetables and cook in a small saucepan with just enough water to cover. Cook until vegetables are tender, then drain off water. Purée or sieve the vegetables and add the baby rice to obtain the texture enjoyed by your baby.

- Any combination of vegetables can be used in this recipe.
- Freeze portions not required for use on another day.

VEGETABLE SAVOURY (1-2 portions)

2-3 tablespoons of cooked vegetables, eg carrots, cauliflower, broccoli
3 tablespoons full fat natural yogurt

Purée the cooked vegetables and mix into the yogurt.

- Use the same vegetables you are having with your meal. Remember not to add salt to the cooking water.

FRUIT PURÉE (1 portion)

Fruit of choice, eg banana, stewed apple, stewed apricot, stewed pear, fresh peach

Blend or sieve the fruit with a little water or fruit juice if necessary.

- Individual portions may be frozen in ice-cube trays.
- Baby rice can be added to any puréed fruit to improve the consistency if preferred.

RIPE PEACH DESSERT (1 portion)

1 ripe peach – skinned and stone removed
(canned peaches in natural juice can be used instead)
2 teaspoons natural yogurt

Blend or mash the peach with natural yogurt.

- Try with a nectarine or plums for a different flavour.

BANANA AND APPLE WITH ORANGE JUICE (1 portion)

¼ apple, peeled, cored and chopped
¼ banana, peeled and chopped
1 teaspoon orange juice

Cook the apple in a small saucepan until soft, the mash it together with the banana and orange juice

- You can use any fruit juice, Try pineapple, mango or apple instead.
- Enjoy the rest of the apple and banana yourself.

STAGE 2 - MEALTIMES BECOME MORE IMPORTANT

Your baby's milk intake will be falling as they enjoy more solid food. Textures will start to get more lumpy and they should enjoy lots of different tastes and textures.

Your baby should be ready to enjoy a main course and dessert at main meal time now.

POTATO AND TOMATO CHEESE (1-2 portions)

1 egg, beaten
 4 tablespoons grated cheese
 4 tablespoons mashed potato
 2 tablespoons hot milk – formula milk or full cream cow's milk
 1 tomato cut into small pieces

Add egg and cheese to the mashed potato. Beat in the hot milk until smooth. Arrange the chopped tomato on the base of a lightly greased pie dish. Put the potato mixture on the top of tomatoes. Bake in a moderately hot oven 190°C, 375°F, Gas 5 for about 30 minutes until set, risen and golden brown.

LENTIL PURÉE WITH CAULIFLOWER (2 portions)

2-3 florets cauliflower, cooked
 4 tablespoons formula milk or full cream cows milk
 25g (1oz) red lentils, cooked
 1 tablespoon grated cheese

Put all the ingredients into a small pan, bring to the boil and simmer for a few minutes, add a small amount of water if necessary. Mash together if necessary to achieve the texture required by your baby. Sprinkle with grated cheese before serving.

- Serve with mashed potato, pasta or rice for an older baby.

TOMATO AND CHEESE PASTA (3-4 portions)

15g (½oz) margarine
 1 large tomato skinned, seeded and chopped
 30g (1oz) cheddar cheese, grated
 1 tablespoon cottage cheese
 1 dessertspoon baby rice
 30g (1oz) dry pasta – cooked according to instructions on the packet

Cook the pasta as directed on the packet. While it is cooking, melt the margarine in a small pan, add the tomato and cook over a low heat for 2 minutes.

Remove from the heat and stir in the cheeses, followed by the baby rice. Pour the sauce over the cooked pasta.

- Toddlers may also enjoy this meal served with some extra vegetables.

BAKED BEAN QUICKIE (1 portion)

2 tablespoons canned baked beans
 1 tablespoon cheddar cheese, grated
 1 dessertspoon breadcrumbs
 1 egg, beaten

Purée or mash the baked beans, add the grated cheese, beaten egg and breadcrumbs. Mix well. Put into a small, greased oven proof dish. Cover with foil and bake at 180°C, 350°F, Gas 4 for 20 minutes.

- Have baked beans on toast with grated cheese for a meal yourself to use up the remaining beans.

YOGURT DESSERT (1portion)

½ ripe banana – mashed
 3 tablespoons natural yogurt

Mix the fruit and yogurt together ½-1 hour before serving.

- Stewed apple, stewed pear or mashed strawberries make a tasty alternative to banana.

STAGE 3 (9-12 MONTHS) - MOVING ONTO FAMILY MEALS

Your baby will now be enjoying more variety, mashed / chopped textures, and moving on to eating the same food as you. A selection of pudding ideas is included. Your baby may enjoy a main course and dessert.

VEGETABLES IN CHEESE SAUCE (4 portions)

100g (4oz) cauliflower
50g (2oz) frozen peas
100g (4oz) courgettes, sliced
1 carrot, peeled and sliced thinly

For the sauce:

25g (1oz) margarine
1½ tablespoons plain flour
120ml (4fl oz) full cream milk
40g (1½oz) cheese, grated

Cook the cauliflower and carrot in a small amount of water until tender. In a separate pan cook the peas and courgettes until soft. Meanwhile, make the cheese sauce. Melt the margarine in a small saucepan, stir in the flour, cook for a minute then gradually add the milk, stirring all the while until the sauce is thickened and smooth. Remove from the heat and stir in the grated cheese. Mash or chop the cooked vegetables and pour the sauce over them.

- Extra portions can be frozen for use on another day.

MULTI-COLOURED CASSEROLE (3 portions)

1 tablespoon oil
1 small onion, peeled and finely chopped
½ red pepper, seeded and finely chopped
150g (5oz) frozen peas
275g (10oz) sweetcorn, canned or frozen
100g (4oz) cheddar cheese, grated

Heat oil in a frying pan, add the onion and red pepper. Cook for 3 minutes. Meanwhile cook the peas (and sweetcorn if necessary) in boiling water. Drain when cooked. Put all the vegetables into an ovenproof dish. Sprinkle with cheese and bake in a preheated oven for 15 minutes at 180°C, 350°F, Gas 4.

- Any combination of colourful vegetables can be used in this dish.

CHEESEY CUSTARD BAKE (1-2 portions)

1 teaspoon margarine
1 egg
2 small onions, chopped
100ml (4fl oz) full cream milk
2 medium carrots, sliced
25g (1oz) grated cheese

Heat margarine in a pan and fry the onion and carrot gently for 1 minute. Cover the pan, reduce heat and cook for a further 3 minutes. Put vegetables into an oven proof dish. Beat the egg lightly, stir in the milk and grated cheese. Pour egg mixture over the vegetables and bake for 30 – 40 minutes at 180°C, 350°F, Gas 4 or until egg mixture is firm.

SEMOLINA WITH FRUIT (2 portions)

1 tablespoon semolina
120ml (4fl oz) full cream milk
1 ripe pear, apple or banana, chopped into small pieces

Put the milk and semolina into a small saucepan, bring to the boil and simmer for 3-4 minutes. Pour into a dish and add the fresh fruit.

- Apricots or stewed plums make a tasty alternative.

BAKED BANANA (1 portion)

1 banana sliced lengthwise
Juice of 1 orange or 3 tablespoons unsweetened orange juice
Margarine or butter
Cinnamon (if desired)

Put the banana into an ovenproof dish. Pour over the orange juice, sprinkle with a little cinnamon and dot with a little margarine. Cover with foil and bake for 10 minutes at 180°C, 350°F, Gas 4.

- Make extra – one each for the rest of the family, delicious!

PEACH MELBA (2-3 portions)

150g (5oz) Greek yogurt

60g (2oz) fromage frais

1 fresh peach or ½ can of peaches – chopped

175g (6oz) raspberries, fresh or canned

1 tablespoon cornflakes, crushed

Mix the yogurt and fromage frais together. Stir in the chopped fruit and sprinkle with the crushed cornflakes.

- Any breakfast cereal, crushed, can be sprinkled over the mixture.
- Enjoy the extra portion yourself

SANDWICHES

Sandwiches make a nourishing meal and at this age your baby will enjoy sandwiches, especially if cut into small shapes.

Choose a variety of different breads; white, brown, wholemeal, granary. Add margarine, then choose a filling:-

- Smooth peanut butter or other nut butters or nut patés*
- Mashed banana
- Mashed dates
- Vegetable paté
- Chopped salad
- Marmite or Vecon
- Cottage cheese, curd cheese or hard cheese
- Hard boiled egg, chopped

Mix and match as desired. Children do like crunchy foods, so try to combine any of the above with some fruit or vegetables.

*NB Please see note about nuts on page 3 of this information

Leicestershire Nutrition and **NHS**
Dietetic Service



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