

FIRST FOOD for CHINESE BABIES



First foods are important to help your baby grow strong and stay healthy. Here are some tips on foods and feeding to help you choose the best for your baby

0-4 MONTHS

Breast milk is best.

Although it appears watery it:

- meets all baby's nutritional needs until 4-6 months old
- is easy for baby to digest
- is convenient
- is naturally clean and sterile
- protects baby against infection
- has long term health benefits for mother and baby.



Nearly all mothers can breastfeed. If you have difficulties, please contact your midwife, obstetrician or Plunket Centre. If not breast feeding, use infant formula until baby is 12 months. Formula meets nutritional needs when made according to manufacturer's instructions. However, it does not have the extra advantages of breast milk.

Developmental Stage:

Baby is unable to use his/her tongue to move food to the back of the mouth for safe swallowing.

Did you know?

- Breast size or shape will not affect volume of milk produced. Feeding baby more frequently leads to increased milk production.
- New Zealand's town water supply is clean. Boil and cool water for infants under 3 months. After 3 months, tap water is suitable unless you are not on town supply.
- Only breast milk or formula should be given until baby is at least 4 months old as the digestive system and kidneys have not fully developed.

✓ **Breast milk (or formula) completely meets the nutritional needs of your baby.**

4-6 MONTHS

Breast milk (or formula) is still the most important food for baby. Offer solids **after** the milk feed. This avoids solids replacing the milk and reducing the volume of breast milk drunk by baby.

Recommended foods:

- Congee: make this smooth and bland tasting using white rice. If congee is too thin, it will be too low in nutrients. You could thicken it with Baby Rice (choose one fortified with iron)
- Baby Rice, steamed rice cake (mix rice flour with Baby Rice)
- pureed vegetables: potato, pumpkin, kumara, marrow.
- pureed cooked fruit: apple, pear, peach, apricot or mashed ripe banana.



Tips:

- Introduce new foods one at a time to allow baby to get used to each. Try 1 teaspoon first, gradually increasing to 3-4

Developmental Stage:

Baby can hold head up and may show interest in food by opening mouth or leaning towards it. The swallowing and chewing muscles develop and baby is ready to try new flavours.

teaspoons per meal. Extra can be frozen to use another day.

- Try a new food every 3-4 days. If baby rejects it, try again in a few days. It can take up to 10 tastes before baby likes the new food.
- Baby's iron stores can be low by this age. Iron is important for growth and development and iron rich foods need to be included. Baby can not digest meat yet, so iron fortified Baby Rice is ideal.
- Homemade food can offer more variety in flavour and texture than commercial baby food. Don't add salt, soya sauce or sugar. Commercial baby foods are convenient for occasional use (check age on label).

✓ **Breast milk (or formula) is the most important food for baby at this age, so offer solids after the milk feed.**

6-7 MONTHS

New foods to add:

- cooked meat and chicken, finely minced (important for iron)
- cooked egg yolk
- cooked mashed vegetables such as bak choy, yams, carrots, taro, cauliflower, peas, courgettes, and broccoli
- mashed cooked or soft ripe fruit, such as nectarines, plums (no skins)
- congee, beef or chicken rice - made into thick porridge consistency
- plain noodles/ rice noodles with meat and vegetables (mashed or finely chopped)
- strips of toasted bread or crackers
- steamed cake (Mantou) and steamed buns
- offer only small pieces of the bun and not the filling as this is too salty.



Tips:

- You may follow traditional customs and practices. For example, carrot soup and boiled rice water are foods commonly given to
- Make food lumpier to encourage baby to develop chewing skills. This helps speech development.

Developmental Stage:

Baby can sit up and is interested in food. Baby can hold finger foods and may have teeth, but if not, has good sturdy gums for chewing. Baby is ready to try new textures and a wider range of foods.

balance 'heatiness'. It is important that these remedies are not used to replace a meal or milk as this will reduce the energy and nutrient intake available for baby's growth and development.

- If your baby is constipated, offer water between feeds (usually not necessary for a breast-fed baby).



✓ **A variety of food and texture can help baby to develop their chewing and swallowing skills.**

8-12 MONTHS

Baby can have solids **before** the breast or formula feeds.

New foods to add:

- gai larn, choy sum, watercress, tonghou, gouji, silverbeet, spinach, beans, creamed corn
- oranges, mandarin, berries and pineapple
- fish and other seafood.
- yoghurt, cottage cheese, grated cheese
- soy foods e.g. tofu, soy custard
- white bread, oat cereals, cornflakes, weet-bix, boiled or steamed dumplings
- smooth peanut butter (If there is a strong family history of allergy to peanuts, delay until after 3 years).



Tips:

- The texture of food should progress through to normal family food during this stage, for example boiled rice, not

Developmental Stage:

Baby's chewing and biting movements continue to improve. Encourage baby to feed his/herself by offering a wide variety of finger food. Try using a cup for fluids.

just congee.

Baby will enjoy finger food. Try plain noodles (not instant noodles or flavoured noodles), cooked vegetable pieces, soft fruit.



- Breast milk or formula is still a very important food for baby as it is high in calcium. Baby needs 3-4 cups (600 - 800mls) of breast milk or formula each day. If baby does not drink this much, encourage other calcium rich foods such as yoghurt, custard, cheese, calcium enriched soymilk. Cow's milk can be given as a drink after 12 months (500 - 600mls each day). Do not use low fat milk before 2 years old.

✓ **Baby should be eating a wide variety of foods and starting to join in with family meal time.**

TIPS FOR ALL BABIES

- **Baby needs Vitamin D:** Vitamin D helps absorption of calcium for strong bones and prevents rickets. Food (milk, meat, egg yolk, fish) provides small amounts of Vitamin D, we need to make the rest through sunlight acting on skin. Let baby play outside in the sunshine, before 11am and after 4pm, for 10-15 minutes 2-3 times a week (with arms or legs uncovered).



- **Homemade food** can be more varied in flavour and texture than commercial baby food, so keep commercial food for occasional use.
- Babies have a better sense of taste than adults and **do not need added salt or soya sauce** to flavour foods. Too much salt is a burden on your baby's kidney. If you use salt when you cook the family meal, cook baby's foods separately. Its good for the health of the whole family to use a low salt diet. If salt is used, it should be iodised salt.



- **Sugary foods and drinks**, including honey, can cause tooth decay and take away the appetite for more nutritious foods.



- **Baby's iron stores** may be low by 4-6 months and iron-rich foods need to be introduced. Start with iron-fortified infant cereal and add finely minced meat or chicken and egg yolk at 6-7 months. Dark-green leafy vegetables (silverbeet, spinach) have a little iron and can be introduced at 8 months
- Giving your baby **finger foods** will encourage baby to feed his or herself and enjoy food. Try plain noodles, cooked vegetable pieces, soft fruit, strips of toasted bread,

TIPS (CONTINUED)

soft cooked chicken pieces. Avoid small hard foods that could make baby choke, e.g. pieces of raw carrot, nuts.



- For **easy cleaning**, place a plastic sheet under high chair. Clean baby's hands first.



FOOD ALLERGY

- Food allergy is an reaction to a food component (usually a protein) that causes an immune response. The symptoms may be diarrhoea, vomiting, dermatitis, irritated nose or eyes, asthma and difficulty breathing.
- Reactions usually occur immediately or within 1 hour of eating or touching the food. The symptoms of food allergy are not always so specific, and may be confused with symptoms produced by other illness. If you suspect food allergy, it is important to confirm the diagnosis with a medical specialist.
- Foods that most commonly cause allergies are eggs, cow's milk, nuts, wheat, fish, shellfish, sesame seeds and soya. Sensitivity to many foods usually disappears within 2-3 years, e.g. milk allergy. Allergies to peanuts, fish and seafood are the most severe and can be life-long.

If you have a family history of allergy, your baby is more likely to have a food allergy. To help prevent allergy in at-risk children it is recommended that:

- Baby is solely breastfed until 6 months of age. Do not introduce solids until after **6** months as doing so before may result in food allergy.
- The introduction of solid foods should not include whole cow's milk (unless cooked), soy and whole eggs until the infant is at least one year old. Avoid tree nuts and fish under two years, and avoid peanut products until at least three years old.

Offer small amounts of one new food at a time with several days in between introductions. This will allow you to identify any possible allergens, but you will then need to confirm this with your doctor.



RECIPES FOR BABY

Recipes for babies from 4-6 months of age

Vegetable/Fruit Purees

Ingredients:

- 100 g vegetable (yam, potato, or pumpkin)
- 60 ml breast milk or formula



Method:

1. Peel selected vegetable
2. Dice vegetable, and steam it for 10-15 minutes until soft
3. Mash well and mix with 60 mls milk
4. Fruit purees (apple/ pear/ peach/ banana) can be prepared by cooking fruit in a small amount of water.

Pumpkin Congee

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup rice
- 50g diced pumpkin
- 400 ml water



Method:

1. Steam diced pumpkin for 10-15 minutes and mash well
2. Wash rice, add 400ml water and cook for 45 minutes
3. Add prepared pumpkin to the congee.

Recipes for babies from 6-7 months of age

Chicken Congee

Ingredients:

- 100g chicken mince
- 1/2 cup rice
- 50g selected vegetable (e.g. carrot, bak choy etc.)
- 400 ml water



Method:

1. Wash the vegetable, then chop into small pieces
2. Wash rice, add 400 ml water and cook for around 45 minutes
3. Add chicken mince into congee, stir well; keep boiling until the chicken is cooked
4. Add vegetable to congee and cook for 5 -10 minutes
5. Pork or beef congee can be prepared following the same method
6. Mixing with *Baby Rice* can thicken congee.

Tomato, Potato and Beef Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 tomato
- 1 medium potato
- 50g beef mince
- 300ml water



Method:

1. Wash tomato and potato and chop into small pieces.
2. Boil potato with 300 ml water until soft.
3. Add tomato and beef mince and cook for 5-10 minutes.
4. You can thicken soup with *Baby Rice*.

Recipes for babies from 8 months of age

Cabbage and Pork Dumpling

Ingredients:

- 100g cabbage
- 100g minced pork
- 8 pieces dumpling skin

Method:

1. Wash and chop cabbage into small pieces
2. Mix cabbage with minced pork for stuffing
3. Wrap the stuffing in the dumpling skin
4. Boil 300ml water, place the dumpling into the boiling water and cook for 5 minutes.



Mushroom Chicken Rice

Ingredients:

- 3 Chinese dry mushrooms, soaked and chopped into small pieces
- 50g chicken mince
- 50g carrot, washed, peeled and cut into small pieces
- 50g rice
- 200 ml water



Method:

1. Mix mushrooms, chicken mince with carrots, and steam for 10 minutes
2. Wash rice, cook with 200ml water
3. Put cooked chicken on top of rice and cook with lid on for a few minutes
4. Stir well before feeding.

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