

## Weaning food

### 1. What is weaning?

Weaning (to solids, not related to the process of weaning off breast milk) is the process of introducing solid foods to your baby, after completion of six months of age.

The World Health Organization recommends that infants be exclusively breastfed until six months of age, after which complementary foods are introduced, along with continued breastfeeding up to two years of age or beyond.

### 2. How do you know your baby is ready for solids?

- Baby should be at least six months old – this is the World Health Organization’s recommendation on weaning guidelines.
- Baby shows interest in your food, often reaching for or grabbing food off your hand or plate.
- Baby, while not required to be able to sit up on their own, should be able to hold a sitting position for some moments while retaining trunk control and without slumping to the side.
- Baby has lost tongue thrust, which means they stop pushing the food out with their tongue when offered with a spoon.
- Baby is willing to chew – This doesn’t mean baby needs teeth; babies can masticate food with their strong gums, even without teeth!

### 3. How do you start weaning?

There are two broad ways in which you can choose to wean your child -

**Traditional Weaning** is the conventional method of weaning where the child is fed mashed or pureed food in the beginning. The care-giver starts solids for the child by spoon feeding purees or mashed food, for the period between 6-8 months, and starts finger foods for the child at around 8 months. By one year, the child is gradually weaned to family food and eats what the family eats.

**Baby-Led Weaning** bypasses the more conventional route of starting weaning with purees and mashed food, while also allowing the child to control what and how much they eat. Baby led weaning allows the child to self-feed from the age of six months when babies are ideally developmentally ready for solids.

### 4. Why does my baby need solid food?

By 6 months of age, your baby has outgrown the amount of iron he or she received from you before birth. Now your baby needs an additional iron source to prevent anemia. Eating solid food also helps your baby learn many new things, including how to swallow food and, eventually, how to feed him or herself. It also exposes babies to many new tastes and textures.

However, between 6 and 9 months of age, most of the calories your baby needs to grow will still come



from breast milk. So, always feed your baby breast milk before offering solid food.

5. What foods should I offer my baby first?

Since babies need extra iron, their best first food is an iron-fortified baby cereal. Once solid foods are introduced, babies do not absorb as much iron from breast milk — another reason to make sure that your baby's first food is a good source of iron



6. How do I introduce my baby to solid food?

- Choose a time when you and your baby are both relaxed and ready to enjoy mealtime.
- Prepare an iron-fortified baby cereal, such as rice, wheat or ragi infant cereal. Mix several tablespoons of dry cereal with water or milk. The cereal should be the consistency of cream of wheat — smooth and semi-liquid.
- Sit your baby in your lap or in a highchair.
- Use a small spoon to feed your baby.
- Your baby may look a little confused at first, and most of the first feeding may end up on his or her face, hands and bib. Don't worry. Your baby will gradually become more comfortable with feedings. Try talking gently to your baby to help him or her relax.
- As your baby begins to enjoy mealtimes, increase the consistency of the cereal so it is like porridge. You can also gradually increase the amount of food you offer.
- If your baby spits out the cereal, cries or isn't interested, stop the feeding. You can try again in a few days.

7. Can I put the cereal or baby food into my baby's bottle?

Please don't put cereal or baby food in a bottle. Your baby needs to learn the difference between liquid and solid foods. Babies need to learn how to move solid food around in their mouth, how to take bites from a spoon and rest between bites, and to stop eating when full. These are all experiences that help babies develop good eating habits

8. What should I look for when buying baby food?

- Choose single-item foods, like single cereal to start with.
- Always read labels. Make sure there is only one ingredient, and look for any added ingredients that can cause allergies, such as orange juice.
- Avoid mixed baby foods, like baby dinners. They have less nutritional value and aren't a good value for the money.
- Choose organic
- Don't give your child "baby desserts." They add extra calories without being nutritious.

9. What are the signs my baby is allergic to a food?

If your baby has several episodes of vomiting after trying a new food, has diarrhea, develops a rash, or has swelling of the lips or eyes, he or she may be having an allergic reaction. Stop the feeding and call your baby's doctor

10. How often should I feed my baby?

Since most of your baby's nutrition still comes from breast milk, you do not need to worry about how often you are offering solid foods. Feed your baby when it is fun, easy and convenient for you. Most babies enjoy eating once a day at first. Parents should let babies show when they are interested and how much they want to eat.

11. Can I start to wean my baby before 4 months?

YOU SHOULD NOT START WEANING BEFORE 4 MONTHS (17 WEEKS) BECAUSE:

- You may reduce the volume of breast milk taken, too soon.
- Your baby's coordination may not be developed enough for proper head control to allow sucking and chewing of solid food.
- Babies at this stage don't usually like different tastes and textures.
- Your baby's system is simply not ready at this stage and weaning could increase the risk of allergies and illness.
- There is evidence to show giving energy-rich foods too soon may result in your baby becoming overweight.

12. Just to be on the safer side can I start weaning after 7 months of age?

DELAYING BEYOND 6 MONTHS CAN HAVE THE FOLLOWING EFFECTS:

- Your baby's increasing energy and nutrient requirements will not be met by milk alone beyond 6 months of age.
- Your baby needs to get used to the foods before he/she actually needs it.
- Delaying weaning also means the process may prove much more difficult. This is because babies are usually most willing to try new foods and flavours when they are between four and six months old.
- Babies weaned later are less likely to go on to eat a varied diet.
- Babies weaned later may not advance to family foods until after their first birthday.

13. What are the foods to avoid?

Foods to avoid:

- Whole nuts are a choking hazard so should be avoided under the age of five, though chopped nuts are fine.
- Honey may contain bacteria that can lead to infant poisoning (botulism).
- Eggs should be cooked till they are hard boiled to kill any bacteria.
- Unpasteurized milk carries the risk of food poisoning. Give only pasteurized milk

14. My baby had frequent episodes of diarrhoea my doctor prescribed naturice to feed, is it lactose free?

Yes, Naturice is a organic baby cereal which is lactose free and gluten free. Safe to feed the baby during Gastro Intestinal disturbances



## Baby Food stages:

<p>6 months</p>  <p><b>STAGE 1</b></p>	<p>7-9 months</p>  <p><b>STAGE 2</b></p>	<p>9-12 months</p>  <p><b>STAGE 3</b></p>
<p><i>Eating puréed food: After cooking the food, mix it and grind it with a hand blender and then strain it with a strainer.</i></p>	<p><i>Eating lumpier food: Lumpy foods should be introduced. This requires cooking the food, mix it with hand or fork but no straining. leave small soft lumps.</i></p>	<p><i>Eat semi - solid to solid food: Textured food: Requires chewing and improves the chewing efficiency (the number of chews required before a food is swallowed). Include finger foods also.</i></p>