

GET UP & GROW

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD



First foods:

Food provided by the
early childhood setting



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing



Introducing solids

At around six months of age, a diet of breastmilk or formula alone no longer meets infants' nutritional requirements. Other foods are needed to complement milk-feeds, and at this age infants are ready to start learning the skills needed for eating solid foods, and to experience new tastes and textures. These skills form a foundation for future eating behaviours and preferences.

Talk to early childhood staff and carers about how your child is eating at home. Staff and carers will assist with feeding, and help your baby to enjoy experiences with new foods. They will also be able to tell you what your child has eaten during the day, and whether they are enjoying any new foods.



What foods to introduce...

Foods can be introduced in any order and at a rate that suits the infant provided the texture is suitable for the infant's stage of development.

Stage	Examples of foods that can be consumed
First foods (from around six months)	Iron rich foods, including fortified cereals (e.g. rice), vegetables (e.g. legumes, soy beans, lentils), fish, liver, meat and poultry, cooked plain tofu
Other nutritious foods to be introduced before 12 months	Cooked or raw vegetables (e.g. carrot, potato, tomato), fruit (e.g. apple, banana, melon), whole egg, cereals (e.g. wheat, oats), bread, pasta, nut pastes, toast fingers and rusks, dairy foods such as full-fat cheese, custards and yoghurt
From 12 to 24 months	Family foods Full-cream pasteurised milk

Talk to staff and carers and let them know what foods your baby has tried so far, and how they are progressing with textures.

Choking risks for infants

Some foods are choking risks for young children whose teeth and chewing skills are still developing. Early childhood settings will have policies in place to reduce the risk of choking in young children.

To reduce the risk of choking:

- Offer foods with developmentally-suitable textures – start with smooth and soft foods, and then progress to minced foods and finally family foods.
- Grate, cook or mash apples, carrots and other hard fruits or vegetables before offering them to young children.
- Whole nuts, popcorn and other hard, small, round and/or sticky solid foods should not be served to young children at all.

'Start with smooth and soft foods...'



How to introduce solids

While solids are being introduced, it is important that milk-feeding continues too. Breastmilk should continue to be the main milk drink for infants up to 12 months of age (or longer if you wish). Alternatively, babies on infant formula should continue to have formula until 12 months also.

As long as iron rich foods are included in first foods, foods can be introduced in any order and at a rate that suits the infant. The order and number of foods being introduced is not important. Slow introduction of solid foods is not necessary.

Progressing to feeding from a cup

Babies can learn to use a cup from an early age, and are usually ready to develop this important skill from around seven months.

As your baby moves to cup-feeding, inform early childhood staff and carers so they can offer your baby drinks from a cup. If you have been providing bottles each day, you will no longer need to send these.



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For more information

Raising Children Network
www.raisingchildren.net.au

www.health.gov.au

All information in this publication is correct as at April 2013