

# → FEEDING DURING THE FIRST YEAR



## FIRST 6 MONTHS



**Milk** is the **only food babies need** during this time.

**Breastmilk** is the best thing you can feed your baby.

### Follow these guidelines if you choose to formula feed:

- Use stage 1 formula.
- Use the correct amounts: 1 level scoop per 30 millilitres of water (warm or room temperature). You can use tap water if the local supply is reliable and clean. Alternatively, you can use bottled water with a low salt content (less than 25 mg/l of sodium).
- If you choose to warm the water, do this before adding the formula. Make sure the water heats up uniformly: use a bain-marie, or stir it if you use a microwave.
- After you add the formula, shake the bottle to mix it. Then drop a few drops of milk onto the back of your hand or the inside of your wrist. If you can hardly feel it, the temperature is right.
- Feed your baby immediately.
- Throw away what they don't consume.
- Follow good hygiene by washing all utensils and by washing your hands before touching these. There is no need to boil teats and bottles after each use.

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## 6-12 MONTHS

Once your baby is over 6 months old you can introduce vegetables, grains, fruit, meat and fish into their diet. Follow these steps to help your baby accept and tolerate these foods\*:

- Introduce one food group at a time.
- Wait two or three days before introducing a new food group.
- There is no set order for introducing the food groups.
- Try to introduce iron-rich foods first (pulses, whole grains, small amounts of red meat, oily fish, eggs, etc.).
- Do not delay the introduction of potential allergens (e.g. eggs, fish), even if the person is at risk.

Your baby will likely only eat small amounts at first. They need time to gradually adapt to the new tastes. Don't force them to eat. Be flexible with portion sizes of fruit, vegetables, leafy greens, pulses, pasta, rice, bread, etc. Let your child's hunger level be your guide. Gradually increase the consistency of the food: introduce lumps, thick textures and solid foods as soon as possible and before your baby is 8-9 months old.

Do not add salt, sugar or sweeteners to the food you give your baby. This helps them get used to natural flavours. Avoid giving your baby honey, sugary drinks and juices. Try to ensure your baby is sitting in an upright position when you feed them, rather than crawling or standing. All meals should be supervised by an adult. You can offer your baby water, especially when the weather is hot. Do not offer your baby unhealthy foods (low in nutrients and rich in salt, sugar and fats).

## INFORMATION



**NOTE:** Consult your pediatrician before starting specific weaning programmes such as baby-led weaning, for example.

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## DAIRY PRODUCTS



**Continue to breastfeed for as long as possible.** You can even give your baby breast milk before feeding them fruit and vegetables. If bottle feeding, move onto stage 2 formula when your baby is 6 months old and continue until they are 12-18 months old. Give your baby around 500 ml of milk a day. Any more than that can cause a dietary imbalance. Your baby can eat plain, unsweetened yoghurt from age 9 months, though breastmilk or formula are better. Do not feed your baby cow's milk until they are one year old.

## GRAINS



You can offer your child bread, boiled mashed rice, pasta, quinoa, oats, cornmeal, semolina, etc. These grains can be added to a vegetable puree from time to time. Choose whole grains and wholemeal products over foods made from refined flours. If using powdered grains, these should ideally contain gluten, be wholegrain and have no added sugars.

## FRUIT



You can give your child any type of fruit at any time of day, though mid-morning is a good time to introduce this group. Start by blending or liquidising pieces of different kinds of peeled or washed fruit. If your baby doesn't want it, try warming it up. Gradually move onto mashing the fruit. The thicker texture will encourage your child to chew. Introduce a variety of fruit so your child discovers different flavours.

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## VEGETABLES



You can give your child any vegetables at any time of day. The most common choices are potatoes, leeks, pumpkin, courgette, tomatoes, carrots and green beans. Boil the vegetables without salt, put them through the blender and add a dash of olive oil before serving. Leafy greens (spinach and chard) are not recommended during the first year. Use the vegetables the same day you prepare them, or freeze them.

## MEAT, FISH, PULSES AND EGGS



A few days after introducing vegetable purees you can try adding well-cooked meat (chicken, beef, lamb or turkey) and boneless fish (can be fresh or frozen; can be white or oily; avoid swordfish, louvar, school shark, shortfin mako shark, spiny dogfish, small-spotted catshark, blue shark, northern pike and tuna). Avoid processed foods like cold cuts, sausages and burgers. You can also try offering your child crustaceans and molluscs (do not feed your child the heads). Eventually you can introduce eggs (start with small amounts of boiled egg) once or twice a week instead of meat or fish. Pulses (chickpeas, lentils, beans, etc.) provide plant-based protein and should ideally substitute one serving of meat-based protein (e.g. lunch or dinner). You can introduce nuts like walnuts, hazelnuts and almonds from age 6 months. Make sure to grind them into a powder or paste to prevent choking.

## UNHEALTHY FOODS



These include sugars, honey and other sweeteners (stevia, raw cane sugar, treacle, fructose, etc.), jams, sweetened drinks and juices (shop-bought and homemade), cacao and chocolate, flans and dairy desserts (shakes, sweetened and flavoured yoghurts, etc.), biscuits, industrial baked goods, jars of sweet and savoury baby food, sweetened breakfast cereals, crisps and salty snacks, cold cuts and processed meats, etc.