

# Moving onto solid foods

(December 2017)

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- The Department of Health (DOH) recommends waiting until babies are around 6 months (26 weeks) before giving any other food or drink
- Babies are not developmentally ready and their guts are not mature enough until around 6 months
- Babies can get all the nutrients they need in the first six months from breast milk or correctly made first stage formula milk or both
- Babies may seem hungrier after 4 months - it is recommended to give them more milk rather than commencing solid foods
- Between 6 and 12 months breast or formula milk will still provide important energy and nutrients for babies and the solid food offered will be complementary to this



# Signs of readiness for moving onto solid food

- Babies will be able to sit up with support and have the ability to hold their head steady
- Babies will be able to coordinate their eyes, hand, and mouth so they can look at food, pick it up and put in their mouth by themselves
- Babies can swallow foods and their tongue stops pushing food out of their mouth





# Misconceptions that babies are ready for solid foods

- Babies waking more frequently in the night
- Babies demanding more milk
- Babies chewing on their fist
- Babies becoming interested in care givers food
- Misconceptions that baby boys are 'hungrier' earlier than girls
- Misconceptions that bigger babies require solid foods earlier
- Changes in babies behaviour/routine





# Premature babies

- Signs of readiness in a premature baby may come at different stages - all babies are different
- Premature babies may need extra support to keep in the seated position –even when they show all the other signs of readiness
- Premature babies may require spoon feeds or mashed feeds for slightly longer before they are able to bring food to their mouth and feed themselves
- Premature babies may take longer to get used to foods, and meals may be longer and more messy to start with as their feeding skills may be slightly less well developed.



# How to start

## Never leave a baby unattended with food

- Sit together with baby – make meal times social
- Let babies enjoy touching and holding foods – let them be messy
- Allow babies to lead the way
- Let babies take time to feed themselves
- Finger foods can be given from age 6 months
- If using a spoon wait for babies to open their mouths before offering food



- All babies are different - some will be interested in meal times from the start, will finger feed themselves and be keen to try new textures
- Some babies may go at a slower pace and need some help getting food into their mouth by spoon
- Some babies may eat more one day and less on other days - this is normal







# The importance of mess

- Mess is inevitable and an important part of babies development
- Food is not just about nutrition
- Allowing babies to explore foods before eating them is reported to support the development of fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination
- Wiping babies hands and face in between mouthfuls can cause reluctance to eat and food aversions





# What to give

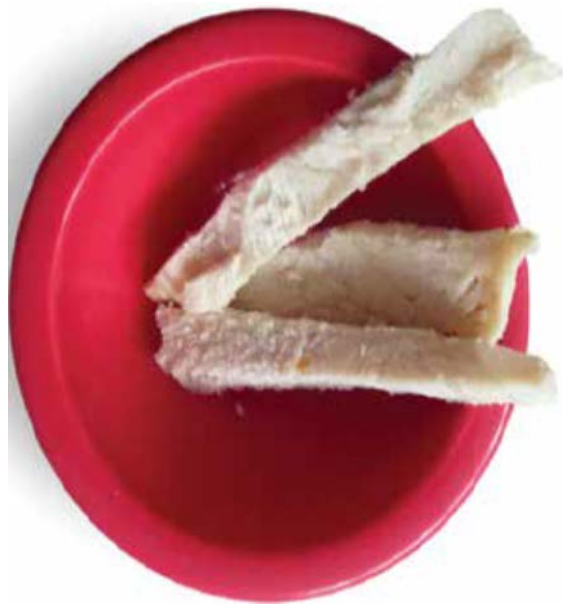
## From 6 months:

- Mashed or soft, sticks of fruit and softly cooked sticks of vegetables
- Soft cooked strips of meat
- Well cooked fish
- Pasta, noodles, lentils
- Strips of toast and chapatti
- Eggs (white and yolk should be firm but no need to hard boil)
- Full fat yoghurt
- Oats, wheat, rice, pearl barley, peas, beans













# Portion sizes







# Ideas for 7-12 months





# Top tips

- Avoid distractions at meal times e.g. not sitting in front of the TV or having the phone or laptop out
- Offer small amounts of colourful fruit and vegetables that will catch their attention
- Give lots of praise
- Focus on savoury foods and give foods they have eaten before alongside new foods
- Expect babies to initially spit out as new tastes can take time to get used to
- Never force babies to eat if they are reluctant
- Ensure eye contact between care giver and baby
- Enjoy mealtimes together- babies will watch and copy care givers eating



# Drinks

- The only drinks that are recommended for the first year of life are breastmilk, correctly made first stage formula and water
- Introduce a cup from around 6 months
- Tap water can be given from 6 months
- Full fat cows milk can be used to mix with food from six months but breastmilk or first stage formula should be the main drink until one year



# Cups

- From around 6 months of age, babies should be introduced to drinking from a cup or beaker
- It is best to use cups that are open-topped or which have a spout that is free-running
- From the age of around 12 months they should be discouraged from drinking from a bottle





# Protecting teeth

- Never offer anything but milk or water in a bottle
- Introduce a cup as soon as possible and wean off the bottle by 12 months
- Avoid foods or drinks that are high in sugar
- Never dip a dummy in anything sweet
- Brush teeth twice a day as soon as they appear with a smear of fluoride toothpaste
- It is important to register babies with a dentist as soon as possible- contact your own dentist



# Other things to consider

- If introducing solids before six months- stick to pureed fruit and vegetables and speak to your Health Visitor
- Avoid sweet, tea, coffee, diet and caffeine drinks
- Avoid cows milk as a drink under one
- Never add anything to a bottle other than milk/water
- Avoid sweet foods- do not add sugar to foods
- Avoid salty foods- do not add salt to foods
- Avoid honey under one year
- Avoid raw meat and fish



# Choking

- Choking can happen with hard foods, bones, small round foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes, and food with skins like sausages and processed meats and pastries
- Avoid whole nuts until children are 5 years of age
- [NHS VIDEOS | My young child is choking - what should I do? \(0-12 months\) - Health videos - NHS Choices](#)

**Never leave a baby unattended with food**



# The Gag Reflex

- Many babies gag when they are learning to manage solid food
- Choking is not the same as gagging
- Gagging is a safety mechanism activated in the baby's mouth to help them learn to eat safely
- When food is not ready to be swallowed (overfull mouth, food not chewed) some babies will gag
- When a baby gags food is pushed forward in the mouth in a retching movement to prevent it getting to the back of the throat



# The Gag Reflex

- It is important that nobody but the baby puts food into his/her mouth
- Babies need to be allowed time when they feed so that they can control each mouthful
- If using a spoon – wait for babies to open their mouths and stop when they have had enough, never force feed a baby



# Vitamins

In July 2016, the scientific advisory committee on nutrition (SCAN) updated recommendations on Vitamin D supplementation for the whole population including new-born babies.

- Everyone over the age of one year should take 10 micrograms of vitamin D daily
- As a precaution breastfeed babies from birth to one year of age should also be given a supplementation of 8.5 to 10 micrograms of vitamin daily
- Babies who are formula feeding do not require any Vitamin D as long as they are having more than 500mls of formula daily as infant formula contains Vitamin D



# Vitamins- BWD Only

- In BWD all pregnant mothers, postnatal mothers up to one year and babies from 4 weeks until their 6<sup>th</sup> birthday receive the Vitamin D supplementation
- From 2018 the dosage of Vitamin D will increase from 7.5micrograms to 8.5-10 micrograms daily
- From 2018 the time an infant receives Vitamin changes from 4 weeks until birth
- Vitamin D supplementation is now recommended for everyone.

# More information

- Contact the health Visiting service
- Healthy start- [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)
- Start4life- [www.nhs.uk/start4life](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life)
- First steps nutrition- [www.firststepsnutrition.org](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org)
- IHV Parents Tips- [www.ihv.org.uk](http://www.ihv.org.uk)
- [www.bliss.org.uk/weaning-your-premature-baby](http://www.bliss.org.uk/weaning-your-premature-baby)
- [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- Nice Faltering growth: recognition and management of faltering growth in children - [www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng75](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng75)