

Factsheets for Early Years settings:

Complementary feeding in babies



HEALTHY EARLY YEARS AWARD
Southampton

What is complementary feeding?

- The new term for 'weaning'
- The time when babies need complementary solid food, introduced gradually, in addition to breastmilk or formula
- It is needed to provide enough energy and nutrients to support growth and also to encourage speech (through the actions of biting and chewing)

What is "Baby led weaning"?

- The process of allowing baby to feed themselves at their own pace
- Encourage finger foods from the outset. Soft foods like avocado, banana, soft fruit and vegetable chunks make good first foods
- Babies will struggle to feed themselves unless all 3 developmental signs of readiness for weaning are present (see page 2)

What drinks should I give my baby?

- Breast or formula milk should still be the main drink for all babies under 12 months
- Introduce water from a beaker from 6 months in addition to breast / formula milk (tap water is fine from 6 months)
- Avoid other drinks like squash, baby juice and pure fruit juice

When should you start?

- Around 6 months of age - ideally wait until the three developmental signs of weaning are all present (see image on second page)
- Never start complementary feeding before 17 weeks

What foods should be given?

- Introduce foods gradually (see information on page 2)



Is there anything to avoid?

- Avoid meat, fish, poultry, eggs, wheat products, cow's milk products, nuts, seeds and citrus fruit until 6 months
- Avoid honey until 12 months due to risk of infant botulism
- Avoid adding salt and sugar
- Choose foods with less added sugar
- Avoid whole nuts until age 5 years
- Nut butters are suitable to include from 6 months (for babies at high risk, i.e. those who already have allergies, or history of allergy in immediate family, advise parents to speak to their GP or health visitor before giving foods)

Factsheets for Early Years settings:

Complementary feeding in babies



HEALTHY EARLY YEARS AWARD
Southampton

A baby is ready if they can:

Stay in a sitting position and hold their head steady



&

Co-ordinate their eyes, hand and mouth so that they can look at the food, pick it up and put it in their mouth all by themselves



&

Swallow food. Babies who are not ready will push their food back out, so they get more round their face than they do in their mouths!



It's rare for these signs to appear together before 6 months.

First Foods

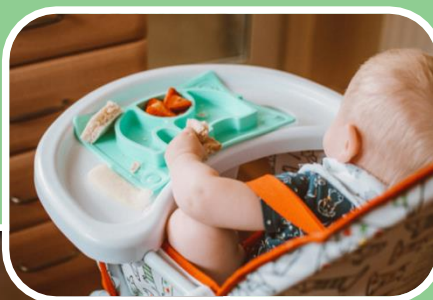
- Soft vegetables and fruits, like avocado, banana, broccoli, carrot, sweet potato, swede, apple, pear
- Focus on a range of tastes and textures, including finger foods

Foods from 6-8 months

- Include soft cooked meat, fish, poultry, pasta, rice, toast, lentils, well cooked eggs, full fat dairy produce
- Can include cow's milk in cooking
- Focus on a range of tastes and textures, including finger foods
- Move on from pureed foods quickly if using these

8-9 months onwards

- Textures likely to be a mixture of soft finger foods and mashed/chopped foods
- Move towards 3 meals a day
- Variety of fruit & veg, starchy carbohydrates, protein-rich foods and dairy products
- Family meals



For more information, please visit:

- www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning
- www.bda.uk.com/resource/complementary-feeding-weaning.html