

Keep Your Baby On Track



0-17 weeks

Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for your baby.

Exclusive or full breastfeeding is recommended for at least the first 17 weeks.

If breastfeeding is not possible, speak with a healthcare professional about safe alternatives.



Learn to recognise your baby's feeding cues.

Early hunger signs include stirring, rooting, and sucking movements.

When your baby has had enough, they might turn their head away, close their mouth, slow down, or fall asleep.

Crying does not always mean your baby is hungry; they may just need comforting!

17-26 weeks

Solid foods should be introduced alongside breast milk or formula...

...at any time from 17 weeks, and should be started by 26 weeks. Signs your baby may be ready to start solid foods include **bringing hands to their mouth, less pushing food out with the tongue, interest in food, good head and neck control, and sitting with support.** Babies develop at different speeds, and some skills (like handling finger foods) come later than others.

Start by offering age-appropriate textures—such as smooth purées or soft, graspable foods if following baby-led weaning.

Prioritise iron-rich foods, including soft meats, pureed pulses, or iron-fortified cereals. From around 4–6 months, babies need iron from food to support healthy growth and brain development.



Gradually offer a variety of foods, including vegetables (including bitter greens), fruits, and grains, to help your baby learn different tastes and textures. It may take a few tries for babies to accept a new food, especially if it tastes bitter, so don't give up if your baby doesn't like a food straight away.



Introduce common allergenic foods...

...early and in safe forms, such as well-cooked egg or smooth peanut butter, unless your healthcare professional advises otherwise.



Do NOT add sugar or salt to your baby's food!



6-9 Months

Move on to thicker, mashed, and lumpy textures as your baby becomes more confident.

Try not to stay on purees for too long. When ready, **offer soft finger foods to encourage self-feeding** – this helps develop skills and confidence too. **Offer a wide variety of flavours and textures.**



Babies often need repeated tastes to accept new foods—this is normal.

Breastmilk should be offered alongside food...

...as a main drink, or infant formula is the next best option. Small amounts of animal milk can be safely mixed into foods.

Offer small amounts of water from an open cup or training cup with meals. As tastes develop, mainly offering water helps reduce a preference for sweet drinks.



9-12 Months



By around 9 months...

...many babies can feed themselves more easily, drink from a cup with both hands, and enjoy family foods that are adapted to be soft and safe.

Avoid using animal milk as the main drink before 12 months. Full-fat animal milk should be used only if breast milk or formula is unavailable.

You can include dairy foods such as yoghurt and cheese in their diet.



By 12 months...

...your baby should mostly drink from a cup rather than a bottle.

After 12 months, cow's milk as a main drink should be **limited to about 500 ml per day** to avoid filling up on milk instead of more nutritious food. Clean water should ideally be the main drink offered.

Continue offering iron-rich foods every day.

ALWAYS !

- **Keep foods soft and cut appropriately**
- **Avoid fruit juice and sweet drinks – sugars in drinks are easy to consume too quickly and don't help your baby feel full – water, breastmilk, and formula are the best choices**
- **Watch and respond to your baby's hunger and fullness cues**
- **Avoid using food to calm crying or as a reward**
- **Learn the difference between gagging (which is common) and choking (an emergency which needs immediate help) to keep feeding safe**

