

Complementary Feeding

The nutrition during a child's first 1,000 days

[Pregnancy 270 days + 1st year 365 days + 2nd year 365 days] builds the foundation for a child's growth & development.

During this period, the brain grows more quickly than at any other time in a person's life and a child needs the right nutrients at the right time to feed her brain's rapid development.

The First 1000 days

From Conception to 2 years of age

- 👶 - 9 to 0 months Pregnancy
- 👶 0 to 6 months Breast Feeding
- 👶 6 to 12 months Solid Food Introduction
- 👶 > 12 months Transition to family diet

Feeding only breast milk is adequate for a baby till 6 months of life.

After that breastfeeding alone is not enough for optimal growth & development of a child.

Hence complementary feeding should be started soon after completing 6 months of age.



Moreover, the biting movement of the jaw appears around 5 months, swallowing of solid foods occurs 6-7 months & the side-to-side movement of tongue develops by 8-12 months.

Look for these milestones as an infant's readiness to consume complementary feeds :



Able to sit up alone or with support



Able to hold her head steady & straight



Opens her mouth on seeing food



Keeps her tongue low & flat to receive the spoon



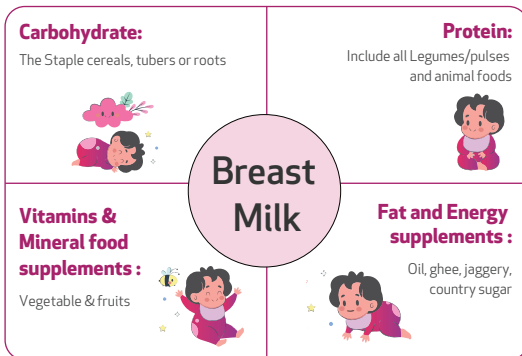
Closes lips over a spoon & scrapes food off while the spoon is removed from mouth



Keeps food in the mouth & swallows it rather than pushing it back out

General Instructions:

- Start with a single-ingredient food (Rice based). See the acceptance & tolerability for 2-7 days & then introduce another food.
- The baby may spit the food initially (4-8 times at least) & then slowly starts accepting the food.
- Give semi-solid food (Avoid watery food such as juices/soup, animal milk)
- To provide more calories from smaller volumes : Food must be thick in consistency - thick enough to stay on the spoon without running off, when the spoon is tilted. Can mix additives* as mentioned below.
- Balanced food:** [Cereal+Pulse(2:1)+Vegetable+oil/ghee]. A Cereal based food mixed with pulses/nuts & vegetables cooked in oil/ghee
- Food items that supply micronutrients should be encouraged like GYOR (green, yellow, orange & red) vegetables & fruits
- Observe hygienic practices while preparing & feeding.
- Include sips of water while feeding from 6 months.
- The water in which rice or vegetables have been boiled for cooking should be used and not thrown away
- In general, some amounts of spices are good for health from the 8th month. Most children can tolerate moderate amounts of spices used for cooking in most homes.
- By 9th month, the baby can hold a chopped vegetable/fruit in between thumb & finger to self feed. By 12-15 months they can self feed liquids by holding a cup & start using spoons from 12 months & by 18 months they can self feed with a spoon (expect some mess).
- Use small soft tipped, heat sensitive spoons, with short & stubby handles which are easy to hold (BPA/BPS/lead free)
- Be aware of common food allergies : Cowmilk, Soya (Tofu), peanuts, Seafoods.



Food square for a young child

Don'ts in infant feeding:

- Avoid foods that may lodge in windpipe (nuts, grapes, raw carrot, popcorn, candies)
- No packed refined foods, biscuits, bakery items, chocolates, fried foods.
- No fruit juices, carbonated drinks, tea, coffee
- No food with excess of sugar, salt & trans fatty acid
- No Screen (TV/Mobile) watching while feeding

Age	Texture of food	Frequency & amount of each meal	Food options
6-7 months	Begin with Puree, thick porridges.	- Daily 2-3 meals along with breastfeeding - Begin with 2-3 tablespoon full	- Porridge [Rice/Wheat/Ragti/Oats/Milletts /suji/dalia]. Can add breastmilk - Kheer/Payasam [Rice/rava/moong dal] - Instant food mixtures (Homemade Amylase rich food*) - Cooked Vegetable/Fruit Puree [Potato, sweetpotato,spinach(Palak), carrot,beetroot, pumpkin,ripe banana, apple, avocado,strawberry, papaya, mango, chikoo]
8-9 months	Mashed foods, finely chopped foods that can be picked up by baby	- Daily 3 meals with breastfeeds plus 1-2 additional snacks - 1/2 bowl (125ml) - Quantity of intake may vary among kids. So no forceful feeding aiming for a fixed amount.	Continue previous foods - Mashed local foods [Idli, Pongal, dhokla, Dal rice /khichdi with added vegetables/peas/green leafs-palak, rasam rice, curd rice,chapati, Upma (rava/dahlia)] - Gradually Introduce various tastes/flavours - Boiled and sliced Vegetables/fruits as finger foods (carrot,beetroot, radish, pumpkin,apple, banana, mango) can be mixed with food or given separately as a snack. - Egg(scrambled/boiled), Steamed - Soft dry fruits: Soaked, mashed or finely cut pieces (raisins, dates, prunes, cranberries)
10-12 months	Mashed foods, finely chopped foods. Gradually introduce normal home food.	Daily 3 meals with breastfeeds plus 2 additional snacks. - 3/4 of a bowl (250ml)	Continue previous foods Slowly add variety of fruits/vegetables & Meat (soup-puree-finely cut pieces) [Chicken, mutton, minced liver, fish]
1-2 years	Staple family foods, mashed or chopped chewable pieces.	- Daily 3 meals with breastfeeds plus 2-3 additional snacks. - 3/4 to 1 bowl (250ML) - Encourage self feeding.	- Can give all foods from the family food plate. - Try to restrict milk intake to <500ml/day. Snacks : fruits, eggs, cereal pancakes, vegetable cutlets, Smoothies, millet cookies. Encourage fibre rich foods (green leaves, vegetables, fruits)

Note: There cannot be one schedule for all babies. Customise frequency and amount as per needs of the individual baby.

Additives*/Add ons to porridge/kheer food mixtures (to enrich the nutrition and taste):

- ☞ Jaggery, unrefined/country sugar, Ghee, ARF Powder, Unsalted butter, coconut oil, Powdered nuts/hard dry fruit (roasted Groundnut /Almond /cashew/walnut), Soft dry fruits (soaked and mashed dates/raisins/prunes/cranberry)

Milk & products :

- ☞ Use breast milk or formula milk for any food preparation. No cow milk <1yr. More than 1 yr, can use pasteurised whole cow milk without dilution. Curd,Yoghurt,Paneer can be introduced from 8 months.

Non - vegetarian foods :

9 months - can add Egg (start with yellow, scrambled egg and then whole egg), then slowly each month can introduce different meats like chicken, mutton, minced liver, fish. (Start as soup followed by puree and then finely cut pieces).

Commercially available instant food mixtures:

Better to use homemade foods than commercial packed preparations. Can use it occasionally on need basis while travelling/on urgency or untimely situations.

Amylase rich food (ARF) preparation:

- Take 250gm of a Cereal (Wheat/Ragi/Jowar) & add 2 - 3 volumes of water.
- Soak for 8 hours and drain excess water.
- Germinate wheat in the dark for 24 to 48 hours.
- Once sprouts are ready, Sun dry for 5 to 8 hours & roast in a pan to remove remaining water.
- Grind, powder the grains, sieve the powder & store in an airtight jar. (Max 1 month)
- Add 1 - 2 teaspoon of ARF powder while making any porridge or kheer to enhance nutrition & digestion.
- ARF can also be used fully as an instant powder to make a porridge.

6 months



Eating puréed food:

After cooking the food, mix it & grind it with a handblender & then strain it with a strainer.

7-9 months



Eating lumpier food:

Lumpy foods should be introduced. This requires cooking the food, mix it with hand or fork but no straining, leave small soft lumps.

9-12 months



Eat semi - solid to solid food: Textured food:

Requires chewing and improves the chewing efficiency (the number of chews required before a food is swallowed). Include finger foods also

Offer Finger foods from 9 months - age : foods that pass the "squish test" : food breaks apart easily when squeezed between your thumb & fingers



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