



Introducing solid foods and early years recipes

Healthy Baby, Healthy Adult!

**active
Sunderland** 



Sunderland
City Council 

Contents

Introduction	5
Exercising whilst pregnant	9
Starting to wean your baby	11
Myths	13
Tips to start!	15
Watch out!	21
Additional information	25
Further support	31
Recipes for 6 month old babies	33
Recipes for 7–9 month old babies	43
Recipes for 10–12 month old babies	51
Keeping your baby active	59
Useful links	61

Introduction



About

Change 4 Life Sunderland have produced a new guide to introducing your baby to solid foods, which has a range of information and early years recipe ideas. The booklet is aimed at families with babies who are ready to start solid foods, often known as weaning.

There are several pages offering advice and guidance, as weaning can be a daunting time for families who are not sure what the process involves. We have also gathered a variety of recipes for the different stages of a babies weaning journey (6-12 months).

If you require advice or have any questions, your health visiting team can support with your child's development.

If you or anyone in your family have any food allergies, please check all ingredients.

The cooking instructions and directions in the recipes are offered as guidelines only. Use your best judgement and proper discretion when preparing or consuming any food.

Eating whilst pregnant

A healthy diet is an important part of a healthy lifestyle at any time. However, it is more important if you're pregnant or are planning a pregnancy. Eating healthily during pregnancy will help your baby to develop and grow.

You do not need to go on a special diet, although it is important to eat a variety of different foods every day to get the right balance of nutrients that you and your baby need.

It's best to get vitamins and minerals from the foods you eat when you're pregnant and it is also recommended you take vitamin D during your pregnancy and folic acid until you are 12 weeks pregnant.

Cheese, milks and other dairy

What to avoid:

- Mould-ripened soft cheeses with a white coating on the outside, such as brie, camembert and chèvre (unless cooked until steaming hot)
- Soft blue cheeses such as Danish blue, gorgonzola and Roquefort (unless cooked until steaming hot)
- Any unpasteurised cow's milk, goat milk or sheep milk
- Any foods made from unpasteurised milk, such as soft goat's cheese

This is because unpasteurised dairy products may contain listeria, a type of bacteria that can cause an infection called listeriosis. There is a small chance that listeriosis can lead to miscarriage, still birth or make your newborn very unwell. Also, soft cheeses with a white coating on the outside have more moisture. This can make it easier for bacteria to grow.

Meat and poultry

What to be mindful of:

- Cold cured meats, such as salami, pepperoni, chorizo and prosciutto (unless cooked thoroughly)

What to avoid:

- Raw or undercooked meat
- Liver and liver products
- All types of pâté, including vegetarian pâté
- Game meats such as goose, partridge, or pheasant

This is because there's a small risk of getting toxoplasmosis if you eat raw and undercooked meat, which can cause miscarriage. Cured meats are not cooked and may have parasites in them that cause toxoplasmosis. Liver and liver products (including cod liver oil) have lots of vitamin A in them, this can be harmful to an unborn baby. Game meats may contain lead shot.

Eggs

What to avoid:

- Raw or partially cooked eggs that are not British Lion (eggs with a lion stamp on them); duck, goose or quail eggs, unless cooked thoroughly until the whites and yolks are solid

British Lion eggs are less likely to carry a germ called salmonella. Salmonella is unlikely to harm your unborn baby, however you could get food poisoning. If you eat eggs that are not British Lion, or not from hens, make sure the whites and yolks are cooked thoroughly.

Fish

What to limit:

- Eat no more than two portions of oily fish a week, such as salmon, trout, mackerel or herring

- Eat no more than two tuna steaks (about 140g cooked or 170g raw) or 4 medium-size cans of tuna (about 140g when drained) per week

You should limit tuna because it has more mercury in it than other fish. Mercury can be harmful to your unborn baby and it is advised to limit oily fish because they may have pollutants such as dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls in them. Eating too much of these can be harmful to your unborn baby.

What to avoid:

- Swordfish
- Marlin
- Shark
- Raw shellfish

Other things to be cautious of

- Caffeine should be limited to 200mg a day (examples of this are two bars of plain chocolate and one mug of filter coffee, or two mugs of tea and one can of cola)
- Drink no more than four cups of herbal tea a day
- Liquorice is safe to eat, but you should avoid liquorice root
- Make sure that you wash all fruits, vegetables and salad ingredients
- Do not take high-dose multivitamin supplements, or any supplements with vitamin A in them
- Drinking alcohol can lead to long-term harm to your baby. If you are pregnant, the safest approach is to not drink at all

This information is based on guidance provided by NHS England.

[Foods to avoid in pregnancy - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Exercising whilst pregnant



If you have an uncomplicated pregnancy and you're already active, it is safe to continue with physical activities throughout pregnancy and this has many benefits to your health and well-being. If you are new to physical activity and have an uncomplicated pregnancy, you can start gradually and build up your activity levels to help improve your physical and mental well-being.

Why should you be active during pregnancy?

- Helps reduce high blood pressure
- Helps to prevent gestational diabetes
- Help in controlling weight gain
- Improved fitness
- Improved sleep

- Improved mood
- Can help towards a positive labour and improved birth outcomes

Aim for 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity spread throughout the week. It doesn't have to be all at once. Simply going for a walk can be an excellent start. Please see the following link for a video on walking during pregnancy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IU9T-gobfA>

Change4Life Sunderland host a variety of physical activity sessions that support ladies when pregnant and after giving birth to encourage healthy lifestyles. Please contact Change4LifeTeam@sunderland.gov.uk for further information about these sessions.

Important safety messages

There is no evidence that being active during pregnancy is harmful to healthy women or their babies.

Listen to your body and adapt, if it feels okay keep going; if it is uncomfortable stop and seek advice.

Remember not to bump the bump. Avoid activities with an increased risk of injury through physical contact or falling/trauma.

If you're unsure, seek advice from your midwife, health visitor or other healthcare professional.

This information is based on guidance provided by the UK Chief Medical Officers.

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/exercise/>

Starting to wean your baby



Introducing your baby to solid foods, often called weaning onto foods, should start when your baby is around 6 months old. It is a particularly important step in your baby's development, and it can be great fun to explore new flavours and textures together for both baby and parent.

Exclusive breastfeeding (giving your baby breast milk only) is recommended for around the first six months (26 weeks) of your baby's life. After that, giving your baby breast milk alongside other food will help them continue to grow and develop. You and your baby can carry on enjoying the benefits of breastfeeding. Breastfeeding into your baby's 2nd year or beyond, alongside other foods, is ideal.

This information is here to help guide you through this exciting time, so you can be sure you're giving your baby a healthy start in life. To begin with, how much your baby takes is less important than getting them used to the idea of eating. They will continue to get most of their nutrition from milk.

Babies don't need three meals a day to start with, so you can start by offering foods at a time that suits you both. Gradually, you'll be able to increase the amount and variety of food your baby eats until they can eventually eat the same as the rest of the family, in smaller portions.

Signs your baby is ready



Every baby is different and may show signs earlier or later. There are three clear signs, which together, show your baby is ready for their first tastes of solid foods alongside breast milk or infant formula.

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!

Myths



Signs that can be mistaken for teething:

- Chewing fists
- Waking in the night when they have previously slept through
- Wanting extra milk feeds

These are normal baby behaviours and not necessarily a sign of hunger, nor being ready to start solid food. Starting solid foods will not make them any more likely to sleep through.

Sometimes a little extra milk will help until they are ready for food.

It is also a misconception that babies that are bigger for their age need to start weaning earlier than other babies. It is easy to see why people might think that but remember, it's what's going on inside that counts.

Babies are ready for solid foods when their digestive systems are developed enough to cope - and this is usually at around 6 months. Every baby is an individual, so if you think yours is ready, speak to a member of your health visiting team or a GP.

Tips to start!



Breast milk or formula feeding

Babies should be given only breast milk or infant formula for around the first 6 months, then breast milk or infant formula alongside food from 6-12 months. Small amounts of whole cow's milk can be mixed with food from 6 months. Whole cow's milk can be given as a drink from 1 year old. Carry on with breast milk for as long as you both want.

Infant formula is a breastmilk substitute given to babies who are either not breast fed or are combination fed (fed both breastmilk and formula milk). When formula is prepared safely, it provides babies with the nutrients they need to grow and develop, although it doesn't have all of the health benefits as breastfeeding, such as protection from infections and other illnesses, as this cannot be replicated by a manufactured process.

If you carry on breastfeeding, as well as formula feeding, your breastmilk will continue to provide nutrition and protection to your baby because

breastmilk contains living cells, hormones and friendly bacteria, which change continuously to meet the baby's needs. Your milk supply is driven by frequent, effective breastfeeding, therefore giving your baby formula can mean they breastfeed less often, so you make less milk.

A simple guide to choosing milk for infants and toddlers

✓ = Safe to give. **XX** = Do not give this milk

X can use in cooking or food preparation but not as the main milk drink

	Infants 0-6 months	Infants 6 months – 1 year	Toddlers 1 year – 2 years
Breastmilk	✓	✓	✓
Pasteurised whole (full-fat) animal milk	XX	X	✓
Infant formula suitable from birth (cows' or goats' milk based)	✓	✓	Only needed if recommended by a health professional
Infant formula marketed for hungrier babies, suitable from birth (cows' milk based)	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not needed
Specialist milks available over the counter: anti-reflux milks, lactose-free and comfort milks.	Only use under medical supervision	Only use under medical supervision	Not needed
Soya protein based infant formula suitable from birth	XX	Only use under medical supervision	Not needed
Follow-on formula suitable from 6 months of age (cows' or goats' milk based)	XX	Not recommended	Not needed
Growing-up milks and toddler milks suitable from around 1 year of age (cows' milk, goats' milk or soya milk based)	XX	XX	Not needed
Unsweetened calcium fortified milk alternatives (e.g. soya, nut, oat, hemp, coconut based milk alternatives). <i>If a milk alternative is given in the second year of life then great care is needed as these are lower in energy and other nutrients than animal milk. Families should seek advice from a Health Visitor or GP before using these as the main milk drink.</i>	XX	X	✓
Rice milk/rice drink – Do not give as main milk drink to children under 5 years of age	XX	XX	X up to 50ml per day

It is worth noting there is no best type of formula or a need for the marketed 'follow on' formula. Buying a more expensive brand of formula does not mean that your baby will grow or develop better than if you were buying a cheaper one. The basic nutritional profile of the majority of infant milks is actually very similar. In the UK, the ingredients in infant formula are strictly regulated and each manufacturer must follow national and EU guidelines on composition.

Formula manufacturers develop their own brands and have to add formula milk components in accordance with the regulatory framework of the Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations 2007. This means if a substance has proven benefits for your baby and can be added to infant formula, the law requires it to be added to all formula. They also have to comply with any relevant changes to those regulations and to regulations around foods for special medical purposes.

You can talk through your options with your health visitor, to support an informed choice.

This information is from an NCT article <https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/feeding/early-days/whats-best-kind-formula-milk>

Getting started

- Let your baby enjoy touching and holding the food
- Always stay with your baby when they're eating in case they choke
- Don't force your baby - wait until the next time if they are not interested this time
- Your baby can feed themselves using their own fingers, as soon as they show an interest
- If you're using a spoon, wait for your baby to open their mouth before you offer the food. Your baby may like to hold a spoon too
- Start by offering just a few pieces or teaspoons of food, once a day
- If the food is hot, allow it to cool and test it before giving it to your baby

- Don't add salt, sugar or stock cubes to your baby's food or cooking water

Start by offering cooked vegetables, soft pieces of fruit or a small amount of mashed fruit or vegetable. Try it after a milk feed and see how they like it! Remember, weaning is all about experimenting so if they don't seem interested at first, keep trying!

Starting on solid foods is a real milestone for you and your baby. It's their first chance to explore the wide variety of food textures and tastes that the world has to offer. Have a look at our top tips for more ideas.

This is where healthy eating starts!

Babies like the food they get used to so give them as many different, healthier foods as you can - this way they are more likely to keep eating them as they grow up. It's a great habit to get into and one that will hopefully make your life a little easier as they get older. Also, don't give them foods or drinks with added sugar or salty or fatty foods, as this will make them more likely to want them as they get older.

Solid foods and milk

As your baby eats more solid food, they may want less milk at each feed, or even drop a milk feed altogether. Babies should continue to have breast milk or infant formula for at least the first year and can carry on with breast milk for as long as you both want.

Take time

Allow plenty of time for eating, especially at first. Rushing or forcing your baby could lead to problems. Go at your baby's pace and stop when your baby shows you that they have had enough.

Messy eating

It can get messy; however, this is an important part of your baby's development. You may want to cover the floor with newspaper or a protective mat to make clearing up easier.

Show them

Babies copy their parents and other children so you can help them by showing them that you eat healthier foods.

Baby led weaning

Let your baby feed themselves with their fingers. This way they can show you how much they want to eat, and it gets them familiar with different types of food. When giving finger foods it is helpful to provide food that the babies can hold onto.

Eat together

Babies enjoy watching you eat and learn from being a part of family mealtimes. Having mealtimes around the same time every day can make it easier for your baby to know when to expect to eat.

How much?

Don't worry if your baby hasn't eaten much in a meal or a day, what they eat over a week is more important.

Tiny tums

Most babies know when they are full up, so don't make them finish a portion when they don't want to. Smaller, more frequent meals and healthier snacks will suit them better when they are young.

Keep trying

Babies like to choose for themselves, and sometimes take their time getting used to different foods. So, offer a small amount, lots of times, to let them gradually get used to new foods.

Homemade is best

The best baby food is homemade from simple ingredients with no added sugar or salt. Any unused food can be kept in the fridge for up to 2 days or

frozen. Then you can reheat the amount you need. It's a lot cheaper than jars! Check 'additional information' with more information on storing and reusing food.

Sit up straight

Make sure your baby is sitting up straight so that they can explore foods better and are less likely to choke or gag.

Jars or packets

Baby food in jars or packets can be handy but portion sizes are often too big and much of it has the same texture. This might stop your baby from liking other foods. That's why jars are best left for when you don't have much time or you're out with your baby. Even if the label says from 4 months, the research reviewed by the World Health Organisation shows that your baby is not usually ready for solid foods until around 6 months. Make sure you decant food before giving to your baby as these are made in factories and can on the rare occasion contain foreign bodies not suitable for consumption. Read the back of the packaging to make sure the ingredients list reflects the meal you think you are buying.

Watch out!



Sweet drinks like squash, fizzy drinks, milkshakes and some fruit juices can have lots of added sugar, so avoid these if you can and protect your baby's teeth. Other drinks to avoid include tea, coffee, diet drinks, low-calorie drinks and no-added-sugar drinks. They will fill up your baby so they're not hungry for healthier food. Instead, offer sips of water from a cup with meals.

Cow's milk as a drink shouldn't be given before one year as it doesn't have the right balance of nutrients. Also, iron from cow's milk is not absorbed as well as it is from breast milk or infant formula

Sweet foods like chocolate, sweets, rusks, biscuits, cakes and pastries have lots of added sugar and fat. Babies don't need them.

Salt and salty food like cheese, bacon, sausages, chips with added salt, crisps, convenience food, takeaways, gravy and meals made with stock cubes are bad for babies as it can affect their kidneys, so limit these.

Choking can happen with hard foods, bones, small round foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes, and food with skin, like sausages. Peel the skin off fruit, vegetables and sausages and remove all bones from meat or fish. Avoid whole nuts – these shouldn't be given until your child is five years old. Grapes need to be cut into 1/4's or 1/8's for babies to swallow them with ease. Cherry tomatoes can also be cut up into small pieces to prevent choking.

Honey occasionally contains bacteria which can make babies ill, so should not be given before they are one year old.

Snack time

To give your baby the healthiest start, instead of chocolate, ice cream and crisps give alternative, healthier snacks such as:

- Rice pudding or porridge (with no added sugar or salt)
- Canned fruit in fruit juice
- Salad vegetables e.g. cucumber with the skin removed.
- Cooked vegetables e.g. carrots, swede, broccoli, cauliflower etc.
- Fresh fruit
- Yoghurt (unsweetened)
- Toast, pitta or chapati fingers
- Plain rice cakes
- Bagels
- Small cubes of cheese

Get into the habit

It's much easier to get your baby on the right track now, rather than try and change what they eat later. Always offer water with food, rather than sugary drinks. Tempting though it is, avoid using food as a reward. Instead, spend time with them – you can take your children to the park, play a game, sing with them or read a book.

Do not give food as a comforter

Babies learn very quickly to use solid food or drinks from a bottle as a comforter. This could lead to weight issues later in life.

Too much sugar is an unhealthy habit

If you give your baby sweet food, they are more likely to get a taste for it and want more. In fact, giving babies food and drink with added sugar or honey can cause serious problems. Here is why too much sugar is unhealthy:

- Sugar can rot their tiny teeth. Drinks with added sugar are not good for baby teeth
- Giving babies sugary things makes them more likely to pester for more
- Too much sugar means excess energy, which can give babies a higher risk of becoming an unhealthy weight
- Offer water with meals instead of sugary drinks and choose healthier snacks like fruit or toast.

Additional information



Allergies

While variety in your baby's diet is important, there is a chance some babies may be allergic to certain foods. That is why it is important to introduce cow's milk, eggs, wheat, gluten, peanut products, seeds, fish, and shellfish one at a time and not before 6 months. There is no evidence that waiting until your child is older will prevent them from developing a food allergy. Give them to your baby in very small amounts and watch carefully for any signs or symptoms of an allergic reaction (see our 'things to look out for' below).

If your baby already has a known allergy, such as a diagnosed food allergy or eczema, or you have a family history of food allergies, eczema, asthma or hay-fever, you may need to be particularly careful when introducing all these foods, so talk to your GP or health visitor first. Remember peanuts, like all nuts, should be crushed or ground.

You can find out more at www.nhs.uk/babyfoodallergy

Signs to look out for:

- Breathing difficulties
- Runny nose
- Stomach upset
- Skin reactions: blotchy, raised, red rashes, itchy patches and
- Swelling around the mouth.

If your child shows any of these symptoms, talk to your GP for advice or call NHS 111 for non-urgent medical enquiries.

If you think your baby is suffering a severe allergic reaction, always call 999 and ask for a paramedic.

Intolerances

Some babies may experience food intolerance (this is different to a food allergy), where they have difficulty digesting certain foods and an unpleasant physical reaction to them. It is often unclear why a person is sensitive to certain foods. A GP can usually diagnose intolerance by looking at symptoms and medical history, or whether the true cause of symptoms is something else.

Signs to look out for:

- Tummy pain, bloating, wind and/or diarrhoea
- Skin rashes and itching

These symptoms usually happen a few hours after eating the food. A GP may refer you to a specialist if your child has digestive symptoms (such as tummy pain and diarrhoea) and:

- Is not growing well
- Has not responded to any elimination diets that your healthcare professional recommended

- Has reacted suddenly or severely to a food
- Has a suspected food allergy

[You can find out more at Food intolerance - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Choking

You should always stay with your baby while they are eating in case they choke. If your child does choke and cannot breathe properly, shout for help, pick up your child and support their chest and chin with one hand. Give five sharp blows between the shoulder blades with the heel of the other hand to help dislodge the object.

There is a difference between choking and gagging. Gagging is a normal reflex as your baby learns to chew and swallow. Gagging is loud and your child may look red when they are gagging. Choking is quiet. If your child has white skin, they may begin to look blue when choking. If they have brown or black skin, their gums, inside their lips or their fingernails may begin to look blue. Learn how to deal with choking by visiting

www.nhs.uk/choking-baby and if possible, undertake a paediatric first aid course.

Hygiene

When preparing food, it is important to ensure your baby is not at risk of any germs, so follow these important steps:

- Always wash and dry your hands well before preparing your baby's food
- Check that your baby's hands are clean before feeding
- Keep surfaces clean and prevent pets from coming near food or surfaces where food is prepared or eaten
- Keep chopping boards thoroughly clean
- Keep raw meat and eggs covered and away from other foods in the fridge including cooked or ready to eat meats. Raw meat should ideally be kept in a sealed container at the bottom of the fridge so it cannot touch or drip onto other foods

- Thoroughly wash and dry all bowls and spoons for feeding in hot soapy water
- You can make up a batch of baby food and freeze it in individual portions, but make sure you only serve each portion once. Do not re-use food that has not been eaten as this might make your baby ill
- Cooked food should not be reheated more than once
- Cook all food thoroughly and cool it as quickly as possible to a lukewarm temperature before giving it to your baby
- Wash and peel fruit and vegetables, such as apples and carrots
- Avoid raw eggs and raw shellfish

Storing and reheating food

- Cool food as quickly as possible (ideally within one to two hours) and place it in the fridge or freezer. Food placed in the fridge should be eaten within two days
- Make sure that frozen food is thoroughly defrosted before reheating. The safest way to do this is in the fridge overnight or using the defrost setting on a microwave
- Reheat food thoroughly so it is very hot all the way through. Allow it to cool before offering it to your baby
- To cool food quickly, place the food in an airtight container and hold it under cold running water, stirring the contents from time to time to allow it to cool all the way through

Vitamins

All babies and young children aged six months to five years should be given vitamin drops containing vitamins A, C and D. Babies under one year who are fed infant formula should not need vitamin drops until they are having less than 500ml (about a pint) of infant formula a day. Breastfed babies should have vitamin D from birth.

Which formula milk is best?

The Healthy Start vouchers are for unbranded infant feeding formula. It is worth remembering there is no 'best' type of formula. For the majority of babies, it really doesn't matter which brand or type you choose. While manufacturers make different claims about their products, regardless of their cost, all brands have to meet the same nutritional and safety standards and have a relatively similar composition. First Steps Nutrition Trust is an independent organisation, which has more information here on the different brands of formula milk available in the UK and their ingredients. First Steps Nutrition Trust also has a useful guide to choosing milk for infants and toddlers.

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59f75004f09ca48694070f3b/t/6011867a17a3582de4282ee9/1611761274701/Infant+milks_+a+simple+guide_Jan21.pdf

Healthy Start Scheme

The Healthy Start scheme aims to improve the health of pregnant women aged under 18 years, pregnant women who have a low income and families with children under the age of four years who receive benefits and tax credits. Through the scheme, eligible recipients receive weekly money on an electronic card to exchange for healthy food such as milk, fruit and vegetables and infant milk formula.

As part of the scheme mothers and children can access free healthy vitamins too.

For more information and to find out where accepts the cards visit the NHS Healthy Start website: www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Further support

If you require advice about your or your baby's health talk to a member of your health visiting team.

Growing Healthy Sunderland <https://www.hdft.nhs.uk/services/childrens-services/growing-healthy-sunderland/>

Growing Healthy [Sunderland-Facebook](#)

There's lots of support available across the city for parents and carers. We have included a few links below:

Together For Children <https://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/>

Sunderland Information Point <https://www.sunderlandinformationpoint.co.uk/kb5/sunderland/directory/home.page>

Change4Life Sunderland

Work with children, young people and families who would benefit from advice, support and information about nutrition and physical activity.

Change4LifeTeam@sunderland.gov.uk

Strategic Advice Service offers free information, advice and guidance on welfare benefits, debt, employment, and housing matters.

There is also advice and information available about where to get support for food (such as foodbanks), utility bills, if you have a shortfall in your rent, free school meals, Healthy Start vouchers and general help around money.

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/managingyourmoney>

Start4Life

Sign up for free emails, videos and texts from the Start4Life Information Service for Parents throughout your pregnancy and as your baby grows at www.nhs.uk/start4life

Call the National Breastfeeding Helpline on 0300 100 0212 or visit www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk

Read the information on introducing solid food at www.nhs.uk/weaning



Recipes for 6 month old babies

At 6 months, little ones may only eat one or two ice cube sized amounts of food at each meal. Remember, babies' tummies are still tiny (about the size of a baby's clenched fist). It is important to introduce foods that can trigger allergic reactions one at a time, in very small amounts, so that you can spot any reaction.

When first starting at 6 months, starting with foods that are easily digested are recommended and starting with one food at a time to help the baby get used to the different flavours and textures. It is also advised to start with savoury tastes first as babies will prefer sweeter tastes which can cause babies to prefer sweeter tastes if these are introduced first. Recipes included are a guide and we recommend babies try a variety of foods that are both sweet and savoury.

Baby-led weaning

Baby-led weaning means giving your baby only finger foods and letting them feed themselves from the start instead of feeding them puréed or mashed food on a spoon. Some families prefer baby-led weaning to spoon feeding, while others do a combination of both. There is no right or wrong way. The most important thing is that your baby eats a wide variety of food and gets all the nutrients they need. There is no more risk of choking when a baby feeds themselves compared to when they are fed with a spoon.

If you would prefer to go with baby-led weaning rather than spoon feeding, cut the foods into sticks that your baby can hold onto and explore for themselves. It is a personal choice to decide whether you would prefer spoon feeding or offer as finger foods, you can even do a mixture of both!

All the food servings and prices are an approximation estimated at the time of making the booklet, these prices are likely to change with time.

Sweet potato



1.5p per 15g serving

1 whole sweet potato

1 dash cooled boiled water or your baby's usual milk

Method

1. Peel the sweet potato and cut into cubes.
2. Place in a pan and cover with water. Cover with a lid and simmer for 15–20 minutes, until tender.
3. Drain and mash with a fork or masher, adding a little milk or cooled boiled water to thin to the desired consistency.

Butternut squash



1.8p per 15g serving

1 whole butternut squash

2 tbsp olive oil

1 dash cooled boiled water or your baby's usual milk

Method

1. Cut the butternut squash in half lengthways and scoop out the seeds. Use a sharp knife to score a criss-cross pattern in the flesh.
2. Place the squash skin-side down on a baking sheet. Drizzle olive oil over each half and then wrap in foil.
3. Cook in the oven at 180C for 45 minutes. Remove and leave to cool.
4. Scoop the flesh into a bowl and mash to the desired consistency, adding a little cooled boiled water or your baby's usual milk to thin it, if required.



Apple and beetroot

3.1p per 15g serving

2 eating apples (about 200g), peeled, cored, and cut into chunks

1 beetroot, peeled and cut into chunks

baby's usual milk

Method

1. Put the beetroot into a steamer over simmering water and cook for around 15 minutes, add the apple and cook for a further 8 minutes until both are tender.
2. Blitz to a purée in a food processor. Add a splash of milk (or water from the saucepan), if necessary, to create a smooth texture. You may need to scrape the sides of the bowl a few times while blitzing to get a smooth consistency throughout.
3. Serve one portion and divide the rest between small containers or ice cube trays and freeze.



Carrot and turnip or swede

2p per 15g serving

2 large carrots (about 200g), peeled and cut into chunks

¼ turnip or swede (about 200g), peeled and cut into chunks

Babies usual milk or water

Method

1. Put the carrots and swede into a steamer over simmering water and cook for about 20 mins until tender.
2. Blitz to a purée in a food processor. Add a splash of milk (or water from the saucepan) to create a smooth texture. You may need to scrape the sides of the bowl a few times while blitzing to get a smooth consistency throughout.
3. Serve one portion and divide the rest between small containers or ice cube trays and freeze.



Banana and avocado

19p per 15g serving

½ small ripe avocado

½ small ripe banana

1 tbsp yoghurt (optional)

Method

1. Halve the avocado, remove the stone and scoop out the centre. Put into baby's bowl.
2. Add the banana and mash together with the avocado.
3. If your baby is already used to purées, you may want to keep this a chunkier consistency.
4. If you are introducing your baby to protein, stir through the yogurt. Serve straight away.



Summer berries

26p per 15g serving

100g blueberries (fresh or frozen)

100g strawberries (fresh or frozen)

100g raspberries (fresh or frozen)

Method

1. Prepare the fruit. Wash and remove any stalks from fresh berries, drain tinned berries and defrost frozen berries according to the instructions on the packet.
2. Combine the berries and blend until you reach the required consistency. Pass the mixture through a fine sieve with a wooden spoon if you want to remove the small seeds.



Green mash

42p per 15g serving

1 medium courgette (approx. 200g)

100g frozen peas

Method

1. Bring a pan of water to the boil. Place the courgette and peas in the pan and cook for around 8 minutes until tender.
2. Drain and allow to cool a little.
3. Blend (or mash together with a fork) until smooth. If the mixture is too thick, add a little of your baby's usual milk.
4. Cool down before serving.
5. Freeze any leftovers in small pots or ice cube trays.



Root vegetable mash

27p per 15g serving

1 medium sweet potato, peeled and chopped

1 medium carrot, peeled and chopped

Method

1. Place the carrot in a saucepan of water, bring to the boil, and cook for approx. 5 minutes. Put the lid on the pan to speed up the boiling.
2. Now add the sweet potato and cook for another 10-15 mins until tender. Drain the vegetables.
3. Blend into a purée (or mash with a fork) until you have a soft smooth texture. If the mixture is too thick, add a little of baby's usual milk.
4. Cool down before serving.
5. Freeze any leftovers in small pots or ice cube trays.

These recipes can be adapted to baby-led weaning as once the food is cooked, they can be served as they are (or cut into cubes, sticks) to babies to explore and use their hands! This is entirely up to you on how you would like to wean your child.



Recipes for 7–9 month old babies

At 7 months, your baby is ready for more complex tastes and textures. Depending on your baby's appetite, about the size of three or four ice cubes of food per meal will be the right amount. At this age, you can put away the blender and use a fork or a masher to get textures of small, soft lumps in a thicker puree.

Your baby will gradually move towards eating three meals a day (breakfast, lunch and dinner). Offering a wide variety of different foods is important to ensure they get enough energy and nutrients (such as iron). Babies do not need salt or sugar added to their food (or cooking water) - salty food is not good for their kidneys and sugar can cause tooth decay.

Remember, it may take ten tries or even more for your baby to get used to new foods, flavours and textures. There will be days when they eat more, some when they eat less, and then days when they reject everything! Don't worry - this is perfectly normal. Just be patient, keep offering a variety of foods, even the ones they do not seem to like, and let them get used to it in their own time.

Babies under 12 months do not need snacks, if you think your baby is hungry in between meals, offer extra milk feeds instead.



Veggie pasta sauce

£2.55 per meal

800g tinned, chopped tomatoes

1 whole leek

1 whole medium courgette

1 whole red pepper

2 whole carrot

1 glug olive oil (for frying)

1 pinch black pepper

1 pinch dried basil or oregano (to season)

Method

1. Chop the carrots and courgette and boil or steam until tender (about 6 minutes).
2. Finely slice the leek and dice the red pepper. Fry in olive oil until soft.
3. Add the carrots, courgette and chopped tomatoes to the pan and simmer for 10 minutes until all the vegetables are well cooked.
4. Season with a little black pepper and a pinch of dried basil or oregano. Serve with small pasta shapes or chopped pasta.
5. Experiment with different vegetables, for example aubergine instead of courgette.



Salmon and broccoli mash

£3.12 per meal

75ml water

1 small, sweet potato, peeled and diced

10 small broccoli florets

100ml whole milk

100g fresh skinless salmon, filleted and de-boned (alternatively, use non-oily fish, such as cod or haddock)

Method

1. Bring the water to the boil in a saucepan, add the sweet potato and broccoli, and simmer for 8-10 minutes until tender.
2. Place the milk and fish in a frying pan and bring to the boil, then simmer for eight minutes until cooked.
3. Finally, mash the cooked fish into the milk and add the drained and mashed vegetables.
4. Process until it is the right consistency for your baby, adding milk if preferred.



Chicken casserole

£4.65 per meal

- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 tsp olive or vegetable oil
- 400g chicken breasts, diced
- 3 large carrots, peeled and chopped
- 300g new potatoes, chopped

Method

1. Fry the onion in the oil until soft, then add the chicken and brown. Transfer to a casserole dish and pour over the water, adding the carrots and new potatoes.
2. Cook in the oven at 180°C for an hour, or until the chicken is cooked through.
3. Puree the chicken and some of the vegetables, mashing the rest of the vegetables finely, before mixing, then serve.



Scrambled eggs

18p per meal

1 small egg

1 tbsp whole milk

1 tsp vegetable oil spread

Method

1. Crack the egg into a small bowl and whisk.
2. Add the whole milk to the egg and mix in.
3. Heat the vegetable oil spread in a non-stick saucepan.
4. Add the egg and cook on a low heat, stirring continuously until the egg scrambles.
5. Remove from heat when the egg is cooked but not rubbery, allowing to cool before serving. Serve with some wholemeal toast to make it even tastier!



Pork and apple stew

90p per meal

50g lean pork mince, cut into 1 cm pieces

1 splash cooking oil

½ whole apple, peeled and diced

50ml water

50ml apple juice

½ whole courgette, chopped finely

½ whole sweet potato, chopped finely

1 pinch cinnamon

Method

1. Lightly fry the mince and drain off any excess fat.
2. Put all the remaining ingredients into a saucepan and simmer until well cooked (about 10 minutes).
3. Drain the fruit and vegetables mix but keep the cooking water. Add the meat to the fruit and vegetable mix and mash to the desired consistency. Add some of the cooking water if too dry.



Cottage cheese and pea mash

95p per meal

100g frozen peas

100g cottage cheese

Bread fingers

Method

1. Cook the potato by either putting it in the oven for an hour at 200°C, or by microwaving it for five minutes on full power. (The potato may not be crispy if you cook it in the microwave, so you could finish it off in the oven for 10 minutes).
2. Boil the peas on the hob until just tender. Mash together with the cottage cheese.
3. Serve for baby with fingers of bread.



Ratatouille

£2.45 per meal

- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 large courgette, diced
- 1 large pepper, yellow or red, deseeded and diced
- 1 aubergine, diced
- 2 tins chopped tomatoes

Method

1. Lightly fry the onion in the oil and add all the other vegetables.
2. Stir, cover and turn down the heat, allow to cook until the vegetables are tender. This should take about 30 minutes.
3. Take out 2 to 3 tbsp for your baby and put in a blender or mash to an appropriate consistency for your baby. Serve with couscous, cooked according to the packet instructions.

Recipes for 10–12 month old babies

Your baby should now be used to having three meals a day - breakfast, lunch and dinner - in addition to their milk feeds. The amount of milk taken will reduce as the quantity of food taken increases.

Lunch and dinner can include a main course and a pudding (such as fruit or unsweetened yoghurt). Try to eat together as much as possible, babies learn from watching you eat.

Remember, your baby does not need salt or sugar added to their food or cooking water. Babies should not eat salt as it is not good for their kidneys and sugar can cause tooth decay. Some of these recipes can be prepped and frozen for later if you have leftovers.



Beef Bolognese

£1.89 per meal

½ onion, peeled (30g)

½ small pepper (30g)

1 tsp vegetable oil

90g minced beef, lean

2 mushrooms (30g)

150g chopped tinned tomatoes

5 basil leaves (optional)

40ml water

15g spaghetti (1 portion)

Method

1. Finely dice the onion and pepper. Then heat the vegetable oil in a saucepan, add the onion and cook for 1 to 2 minutes until softened.
2. Add the mince to the pan and cook for 3-5 minutes until starting to brown.
3. Dice the mushrooms, then add to the pan along with the tomatoes, basil and water. Cook for 20-30 minutes until the meat and veg are cooked and the sauce has thickened.
4. In the meantime, bring a pan of water to the boil, add the spaghetti and cook for 10 to 12 minutes until soft. Then drain.
5. Put the pasta in a bowl, place quarter of the bolognese mix over the top and serve with a fork. Chop the meal if preferred.



Butternut squash and red pepper soup

68p per meal

220g butternut squash, peeled
½ large red pepper, deseeded
(100g)
½ medium onion, peeled (75g)
2 tsp vegetable oil

½ tsp dried herbs
400ml water
50g dried red lentils
Small slice wholemeal bread (1
portion)

Method

1. De-seed the butternut squash and pepper and dice into small pieces. Dice the onion.
2. Heat the oil in a pan and add the butternut squash, pepper and onion. Cook until starting to soften (5-6mins).
3. Add the oregano, water and lentils. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer gently for 20-30 minutes until the veg is soft and the lentils are cooked. Add a little more water during cooking if needed.
4. Set aside to cool a little before blending until smooth (or leave with a chunky texture if preferred). Then put ¼ of the soup into a bowl and freeze the other three portions for other days.
5. Toast the slice of bread and cut into toasted fingers to go on the side.



Spanish omelette

£1.28 per meal

1 whole onion

3 tbsp olive oil

275g potato, preferably Desiree or similar

5 large eggs

Method

1. Put 3 tablespoons of olive oil in the pan on the hob on a medium heat.
2. Peel the onion and cut it in half, then cut the halves into thin slices and put them in the pan.
3. Peel the potatoes, cut them into thin round slices, dry them in a clean tea towel and add them to the pan.
4. Toss the onion and potatoes in the oil to make sure they are thoroughly coated, and then turn the heat right down, put a lid on the pan and cook them gently for about 20 minutes, or until tender.
5. Break the eggs into a bowl and lightly whisk them with a fork. When the onions and potatoes are cooked, pour on the egg mixture and add the rest of the olive oil. Keep the heat low and leave the omelette to cook gently for about 20 minutes. When there is no liquid egg left on the top, it is ready to cook the other side.

6. Do this either by turning it out upside down onto a plate, and then sliding it back into the frying pan, or by putting the pan under a hot grill for about 5 minutes, or until it is nicely cooked and golden.
7. Cut into thin wedges or finger-food sized cubes before serving. Freeze any additional portions to have later.



Fried rice

73p per meal

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 tsp of olive oil | 2 tbsp of water |
| 2 tbsp of shredded carrots | ½ cup of cooked brown rice |
| 2 tbsp of frozen peas (petit pois) | 1 large egg, beaten |

Method

1. In a small frying pan, warm the olive oil over medium heat.
2. Add carrots into the pan and cook for 3 minutes or until carrots are tender. Then add peas and water.
3. Cover and cook for 3 minutes or until the peas are tender.
4. Stir in the rice and cook until warm.
5. Add egg and stir constantly until the egg is fully cooked. Cool and serve.



Crustless mini quiche

59p per quiche

1-2 tbsp vegetable oil

5 spring onions (optional)

½ medium pepper (any colour),
deseeded

1 small tomato

5 medium eggs

2 tbsp whole milk

1 tsp dried mixed herbs (optional)

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas Mark 6. Lightly grease a muffin tray.
2. Finely dice the spring onions (if using), peppers and tomatoes.
3. Distribute the vegetables between the muffin tray holes.
4. Beat the eggs, milk and herbs together and pour over the vegetables in the muffin tray.
5. Bake in the oven for 10 to 15 minutes, or until puffy, light brown and the eggs are set. Cool for a few minutes before serving.



Baked potato with cheese

70p per meal

1 large baking potato

30g ($\frac{1}{8}$ cup) butter

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup of milk

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup of grated mild cheese

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp finely chopped fresh chives

Method

1. Wash the potato, prick with a fork, then bake at 180°C for about 1½ hours until the potato feels soft. Can also microwave.
2. Remove from the oven/microwave and cut in half. Scoop the potato and place in a bowl, along with the milk, butter and most of the cheese.
3. Mash well, then return the potato mixture to the skins, place on a cooking sheet and top with the remaining cheese.
4. Return to the oven/microwave and cook for a further 10-15 minutes, until the cheese has melted and is golden in colour.
5. Sprinkle with chives and serve.



Mini beef meatballs

£4.12 per meal

1 slice of wholemeal bread, crusts removed	2 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
1 dash milk	1 onion, chopped
500g beef mince	1 carrot, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped	1 stick of celery
1 tbsp chives, chopped	2 tbsp tomato puree

Method

1. Tear the bread into chunks and soak in milk for five minutes. Squeeze out the milk and set aside.
2. Put the bread into a bowl with the minced meat, one clove of garlic and chives, and mix well.
3. Roll into balls and fry in oil until cooked through and golden.
4. In a pan, fry the onion, carrot and celery in oil until they begin to brown, then add the other clove of garlic.
5. Add the tomato puree, pepper and tomatoes plus the left-over milk.
6. Simmer for 20 minutes until the sauce thickens, then add the cooked meatballs and simmer for another five minutes.

Keeping your baby active

Ways to get your baby moving in their first year

Lay your baby down on their back so they can kick their legs.

Pulling, pushing, grasping and playing with other people are great ways to practise different kinds of movements.

Once your baby has started crawling, let them crawl around the floor, but make sure it's safe first.

Playing outdoors helps your baby learn about their surroundings.

You can take your baby swimming from an early age - there's no need to wait until they've been vaccinated.

Tummy time activities with toys to get them active and strengthen their neck muscles.

Baby walkers can be useful but make sure they are not used longer than 20 minutes as it can encourage standing on tip toes which delays walking and they can also cause accidents in babies.

Attend Family Centre classes to encourage active behaviour.



Useful links

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/keeping-kids-active/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/recipes-and-meal-ideas/>

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-resources>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/weaning-recipes>

<https://www.babycentre.co.uk/c546768/baby-recipes>

<https://www.healthylittlefoodies.com/category/baby-friendly-recipes/baby-led-weaning/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/budget>

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/12/Health-professionals-guide-to-infant-formula.pdf>

https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2008/02/start4life_guide_to_bottle_feeding.pdf

<https://ihv.org.uk/families/top-tips>

<https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/feeding/practical-tips/mixed-feeding-combining-breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding>

<https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/feeding/early-days/benefits-breastfeeding>

<https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/feeding/early-days/about-breastmilk-and-breastfeeding>

<https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/feeding/practical-tips/why-are-there-different-types-infant-formula>

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/infant-milks-in-uk>

<https://infantmilkinfo.org/>

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/infant-milks-overview>



Change4Life is here to help you and your family be healthier and happier. Featuring top healthy eating tips, quick and easy family recipes, fun activities for kids, offers and lots more! Change 4 Life Sunderland can help you make small changes that make a big difference. For more information contact Change 4 Life Sunderland

Email: Change4LifeTeam@sunderland.gov.uk



Active Sunderland's aim is to develop an 'All together an Active Sunderland a city where everyone is as active as they can be'. We are passionate about getting more people active. If you want to burn calories, get some fresh air, and make new friends the Active Sunderland Wellness Walking Programme is perfect. The programme consists of a series of walks that take place every week at various locations across Sunderland. Launched in 2010, it has helped thousands of residents to get outdoors and walking in some of the city's most attractive green spaces, parks and locations. For more information contact Active Sunderland

Email: active@sunderland.gov.uk

**active
Sunderland**



Sunderland
City Council