Welcome to FoodShare’s Baby Nutrition Handout!

This guide will show you just how easy it is to introduce solids to your little one, beginning with pureed, all the way through to family-friendly finger foods! FoodShare has been working with new parents for many years to promote the benefits of home-made baby food.

For more information on feeding your baby, please visit the Toronto Public Health website, www.toronto.ca/health/nutrition/peernutrition.htm, or speak to your baby’s doctor or dietitian.
Two Simple Steps to Success!

We know that introducing solids to your baby for the first time can be daunting. That’s why we’ve reviewed all of the research for you! The way we see it, there are two simple steps to follow when feeding healthy babies:

1. **Start with Iron-rich foods such as Iron-fortified cereals, Iron-rich proteins and Iron-rich vegetables.**

2. **Follow with other vegetables, fruits and milk products in no particular order.**

Breast Milk &/or Iron-Fortified Infant Formula

Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula is essential for the first 6 months of baby’s life. This is how they get all of their essential nutrients for growth and development.

It’s important to start solids slowly when your baby is ready.

Offer breast milk or Iron-fortified formula first, then solids at feeding time.

If breastfeeding, give baby 400 IU of liquid Vitamin D daily.

If baby is thirsty, you can offer water from a cup. Using a cup helps baby learn drinking skills.
1. Start With Iron-Rich Foods

Foods rich in Iron are essential for baby’s growth, development, energy levels and overall well-being. Choose these foods first, in no particular order.

Iron-Rich Proteins

Well-cooked beef, lamb, turkey, wild meats, chicken, mutton, legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas), pork, goat, silken (soft) tofu, fish, shellfish, and hard cooked whole eggs.

Iron-Fortified Infant Cereal

Iron-fortified, single grain infant cereal like rice, barley, oatmeal or wheat.

Iron-Rich Vegetables

Cooked spinach, broccoli, potato and dark leafy greens like swiss chard and kale.

Tips on Iron-Rich Foods:

• Add breast milk, formula or water to food for easier swallowing.

• Feed cereal from a small spoon, not from a bottle.

• Do not give processed meats such as ham, hot dogs/wieners, bologna, salami or sausages since they are high in salt.

• To prevent choking, do not give whole nuts or nut butters served on a spoon. Read on for more tips to avoid choking.
2. Follow With Other Vegetables, Fruits and Milk Products

To increase variety in baby's diet, and make sure they’re getting all of the nutrients they need, start introducing foods from other food groups in any order.

Vegetables

Offer puréed cooked vegetables, followed by mashed, such as sweet potato, squash, pumpkin, carrots, peas, green beans and zucchini.

Fruits

Offer puréed cooked fruit, followed by ripe mashed fruit or mashed canned fruit (packed in water or juice, not syrup). Next give soft pieces of ripe fruit like banana, mango, pears, peaches, melon, kiwi and avocado.

Milk Products

At the same time as vegetables and fruits, you can offer milk products like cheese, cottage cheese or plain yogurt (3.25% Milk Fat or higher).

Tips on Vegetables, Fruits and Milk Products:

- Wash, peel and remove seeds or pits.

- Dark green and orange vegetables are rich in important nutrients. Offer these every day.

- Babies do not need fruit juice. If offering juice, limit to 125ml (1/4 cup) of 100% unpasteurized unsweetened juice per day. Serve in a cup as part of a meal or snack to help limit juice consumption and prevent tooth decay.

- Wait until 9 months to offer fluid whole milk (3.25% Milk Fat).

- Do not give unpasteurized cheese (soft cheeses like Brie, Camembert) due to the risk of food poisoning.
Solid Food Summary For Baby
From 9 - 12 months

**Breast Milk or Iron-Fortified Infant Formula**
- Offer solid foods first, then breast milk or iron-fortified formula at feeding time.
- If breastfeeding exclusively or partially, give baby 400 IU of liquid vitamin D daily.
- If baby is thirsty, you can offer water from a cup. Using a cup helps baby learn drinking skills.

**Vegetables and Fruits:**
Offer soft pieces of cooked vegetables, fresh fruit, cooked or canned fruit (packed in water or juice, not syrup).

**Tips:**
- Wash, peel and remove seeds or pits.
- Dark green and orange vegetables are rich in important nutrients. Offer every day.
- Babies do not need fruit juice. If offering juice, limit to 125-175 ml (4-6 fluid ounces) of 100% unpasteurized unsweetened juice per day. Serve in a cup as part of a meal or snack to help limit juice consumption and prevent tooth decay.

**Grain Products:**
Continue to offer iron-fortified infant cereal in addition to other grain products.

**Offer finger foods such as:**
- pieces of bagel
- dry toast
- bread crust
- rice
- roti
- cooked pasta or noodles
- flat bread
- unsalted crackers

**Meat and Alternatives:**
Offer soft, bite-size pieces of well-cooked beef, chicken, turkey, lamb, pork, mutton, goat, wild meats, fish, shellfish, silken (soft) tofu, legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas) and hard cooked whole eggs.

**Tips:**
- Do not give processed meats such as ham, hot dogs/wieners, bologna, salami or sausages since they are high in salt.
- To prevent choking, do not give whole nuts or nut butters served on a spoon.

**Milk and Milk Products:**
Offer shredded or cubed cheese, cottage cheese or plain yogurt (3.25% MF or higher).

Do not give unpasteurized milk or cheese (soft cheeses like Brie, Camembert) due to risk of food poisoning.

**Tips on Fluid Milk:**
- Offer homo (whole) cow or goat milk (3.25% MF). Offer in a cup as part of a meal or snack to help prevent tooth decay and excessive milk consumption.
- Limit cow or goat milk to 500-750 ml (2-3 cups) per day.
- Do not give skim, 1% or 2% milk, soy, rice or almond beverages. They do not have enough fat.
- If you feed baby a diet that excludes milk, talk to baby’s doctor or a dietitian for advice.
## Baby Food Texture Guide

Follow this guide from when baby starts solids at 6 months through to sharing family meals at 12 months. Remember each baby is different. For more detailed assistance on textures, visit your baby’s doctor or dietitian.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (months)</th>
<th>Developmental Stage</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Texture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Start solid food when baby is <strong>6 months old</strong> and: • Has good head control • Sits up in a high chair • Shows interest in food • Opens mouth wide for food and closes lips around a spoon • Can keep food in their mouth and swallow it • Can turn their head away to refuse foods</td>
<td>Start <strong>Iron-rich foods first:</strong> • Iron-fortified infant cereal • Meat, poultry, fish, shellfish • Hard cooked whole egg, legumes, tofu</td>
<td>As baby is ready, try: • Puréed • Thick semi-solids (like applesauce) • Soft, mashed foods without lumps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Baby: • Can sit on own • Is starting to crawl • Shows interest in feeding themselves • Can pick up and hold small pieces of food • Drinks from a cup with help • Is learning to chew</td>
<td><strong>Then introduce vegetables, fruits and milk products (in any order).</strong></td>
<td>Wait to offer fluid whole milk (3.25% MF).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>By 12 months baby should be eating the same variety of healthy foods that the family is eating.</td>
<td>Offer <strong>grain products</strong> like pieces of dry toast, cooked pasta and unsalted crackers. Between 9 to 12 months offer homo (whole) cow or goat fluid milk (3.25% MF). <strong>To prevent choking, do not give baby hard, small and round foods such as nuts, popcorn and whole grapes until 4 years of age.</strong></td>
<td>As baby is ready, try: • Mashed foods with lumps • Small, soft pieces (size of a pea) • Minced foods • Grated foods • Crunchy foods that soften or dissolve in the mouth (like crackers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Baby: • Is crawling • May pull self up to stand • Feeds self with fingers • Tries to feed self with spoon • Tries to hold cup when drinking • Bites and chews food</td>
<td>By 12 months baby should be eating the same variety of healthy foods that the family is eating.</td>
<td>Offer: • Soft, bite-sized pieces of food • Finger foods</td>
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</table>
To Avoid Choking

- Always stay with baby and pay attention during mealtimes.
- Use a highchair and buckle the seat belt.
- Do not feed baby in a moving car.
- To prevent choking, do not give baby hard, small and round foods like whole nuts, seeds, popcorn, whole grapes, raisins, hard raw vegetables or fruit, candy, chips or hot dogs.
- Do not give peanut butter spread thickly or served on a spoon. Thinly spread smooth nut butters on toast or crackers.
- Do not give honey for the first year. It can cause botulism (a serious type of food poisoning).
- Swordfish, shark, fresh or frozen tuna steak, marlin, orange roughy and escolar are high in mercury. Do not give baby these fish more than once a month.
- Introduce one new food at a time in the morning or at lunch. Wait at least 3 to 5 days before trying a different food. If baby has a food allergy, this makes it easier to tell which food they are allergic to.

Food Allergies

Baby is more likely to have an allergy if a parent, brother or sister has allergies, asthma or eczema.

You do not need to avoid or delay giving potentially allergenic foods (egg, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, fish, shellfish, wheat, cow's milk). Delaying foods will not prevent an allergy, even for babies with a family history of food allergy.

Watch for signs of allergies when you introduce a new food such as: rash, hives, swelling around the mouth, vomiting, diarrhea or breathing problems. Call 911 if baby is having trouble breathing.

If baby shows no signs of allergies after trying each new food, you can start serving foods together.

For example:
- mixed grain cereals after trying each single-grain cereal
- puréed, mashed or finely minced meat and carrots

If you think baby has a food allergy, stop feeding the suspected food and talk to your baby’s doctor or dietitian.
Healthy Eating Habits for the Whole Family

• Include baby at family mealtimes. Babies learn by watching others.
• Keep mealtimes pleasant. Talk, smile and look at your baby. Be encouraging but do not pressure baby to eat.
• Let baby explore food with clean hands or feed themselves with a spoon. Making a mess is part of learning to eat!
• Avoid distractions such as TV, toys, computer and phones. This will help you and baby focus on eating.
• Let baby decide how much to eat. Do not restrict food. If baby does not want to eat, try again at the next meal. It is normal for babies to eat different amounts of food each day.
• Be patient with new foods. Your baby may need to try a food many times before they like it.
• Never use food as a reward or punishment.
• Do not use games to get baby to eat.

You decide what foods to offer, when to offer meals and snacks and where baby will eat.
Trust baby to decide which foods to eat and how much to eat (if at all).
How To Make Your Own Baby Food

Why?
- You can offer a greater variety of foods.
- You can control the change in texture of foods as baby grows.
- You can provide nutritious, fresh food that’s cheap to make!

Getting Started:
Wash your hands, equipment and counter tops with hot soapy water. Rinse and let air dry.

Tips:
- Wash fresh vegetables and fruits under cold running tap water for 30 seconds.
- Use a clean produce brush to scrub produce with a firm skin such as carrots, potatoes, melons and squash. Peel if needed.
- Steam fruits and vegetables until soft (easily pierced with a fork) to reduce nutrient losses.
- Avoid added salt, sugar/sweeteners and spices so baby learns the natural flavour of foods.
- Baby will not need puréed or blended foods for long. At about 7 months, offer mashed foods. Next, offer soft pieces of food.

Getting A Baby Food Mill
To purchase a baby food mill (grinder), contact:
Brooke Ziebell at FoodShare
Email: brooke@foodshare.net
Phone: 416-363-6441 ext. 248

Baby food mills are also available to buy in some stores.

What You Need:
- Vegetable scrubbing brush
- Vegetable peeler
- Pot or saucepan
- Cutting board and a knife
- Baby food mill (grinder) OR
  - Fine meshed strainer/sieve and a spoon OR
  - Blender or food processor OR
  - Potato masher OR
  - A fork
## How To Make Your Own Baby Food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Directions</th>
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</table>
| **Iron-Fortified Infant Cereal**       | • Add breast milk, formula or water to cereal to get the right consistency  
• Stir well and feed from a spoon                                                                                                 |
| **Meat:** beef, chicken, turkey, lamb, mutton, goat, pork, wild meats, fish, shellfish... | • Place meat or fish in a pot. Add just enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and then simmer until fully cooked  
• You can also bake, roast, braise or steam  
• After cooking, remove skin, bones, cartilage, tough pieces and trim fat  
• Cut meat or flake fish into small pieces  
• Grind, blend or mash with a small amount of breast milk, formula, water or cooking water to get the right texture |
| **Meat Alternatives:** legumes, tofu, whole eggs... | • Cook legumes such as beans, lentils, chickpeas according to package directions  
• Drain and rinse canned legumes before using to remove salt and make them less gassy for baby  
• Hard cook eggs until yolk and white are firm, not runny  
• Use plain tofu  
• Grind, blend or mash with breast milk, formula or water |
| **Vegetables and Fruits**              | • Wash fresh vegetables and fruits under cold running water  
• Remove skins, seeds or pits and slice, chop or dice  
• Steam, microwave or boil until soft and easily pierced with a fork  
• Grind, blend, mash or press food through strainer  
• Mash without cooking ripe, soft fruits like banana, mango, pears, avocado, peaches, melon, kiwi, papaya and canned fruit  
• Drain and rinse canned vegetables before using to remove salt  
• Choose canned fruit packed in fruit juice or water, not syrup. Drain before using  
• Blend with a small amount of breast milk, formula or cooking water |

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Storing, Warming and Serving Baby Food

**Storing Baby Food:**

- Store food in small, clean, tightly sealed containers in the fridge.
- To freeze put puréed food in an ice cube tray or drop spoonfuls on a baking sheet lined with waxed paper.
- Cover with wax paper or plastic wrap and put in the freezer.
- Once frozen, put food in freezer bags, remove air and seal.
- Write the date and name of food on the freezer bag.
- When you want to use the food thaw in the fridge, under cold running water or as part of the heating process.

**Keeping Baby’s Food Safe:**

- Store baby food for a maximum of 2 days in the fridge, 1 month in the fridge freezer or 3 months in a deep freezer.
- Never use food that is past its best before date.
- Reheat only the amount of food baby needs. Throw out or compost any food that baby does not eat.
- Do not feed your baby directly from the jar or container of baby food. Germs from baby’s saliva can spoil the food. Throw out or compost any food that comes into contact with baby’s saliva.

**Warming Baby Food:**

- Use a double boiler, egg poacher, or place a dish in hot water to warm baby food. Stir well.
- Heat foods until steaming hot. Allow to cool before serving.
- If using a microwave, be careful not to overheat. Stir well, since food heats unevenly and can cause burns.
- Always check the food’s temperature on the back of your hand to make sure it’s not too hot.
Choosing Ingredients For Your Baby

The choice to buy organic or local foods is a personal one. You might have to consider availability and price. All vegetables and fruits are healthy for you and your family.

What is Local Food?
Food grown or produced within the province that it’s sold. Look for the Foodland Ontario symbol.

What is Organic Food?
Food grown without chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), antibiotics and growth hormones. Look for the Canada Organic symbol.

All vegetables and fruits should be washed in cool, running water before being used!

Some non-organic vegetables and fruits have more pesticides than others. The U.S. Environmental Working Group releases a list of foods with the highest level of pesticides each year. Visit to www.ewg.org/foodnews to get an updated list.

The EWG “Highest Pesticide List”:

- Apples
- Grapes
- Hot Peppers
- Celery
- Spinach
- Nectarines
- Cucumbers
- Potatoes
- Strawberries
- Bell Peppers
- Cherry Tomatoes
- Peaches
- Kale/Collards
- Summer Squash
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Information up to date as of November 2013

FoodShare
Good Healthy Food For All!
www.foodshare.net

FoodShare is a non-profit organization that works with communities and schools to deliver healthy food and food education. We believe everyone deserves access to affordable high-quality fresh food. Since 1985, FoodShare has pioneered innovative programs like the Good Food Box, impacted what kids eat in school, and improved the way people eat and grow food across Toronto every day.