

Hygiene and food safety:

Babies and young children can get sick easily from germs in food. To protect them from unsafe food following the guidelines:

Keep clean

- Wash your hands before handling food and often during food preparation.
- Wash your hands after going to the toilet, changing the baby or in contact with animals.
- Wash your child's hands before he/she starts eating
- Wash all surfaces and equipment used for food preparation or serving.
- Use clean utensils and equipment to make food
- Use clean cups, bowls and spoons to feed children

Separate raw and cooked foods

- Store raw and cooked foods in separate, covered containers.

Cook thoroughly

- Cook food thoroughly especially meat and poultry
- Reheat cooked food thoroughly by steaming or boiling before eating.

Food for infants and young children should be freshly prepared and not stored for long periods of time after cooking.

Use clean, safe water and raw materials

- use clean safe water or treat it to make it safe (1 tsp of JIK in 20 litres of water - allow to stand for 4 hours before using)
- wash fruits and vegetables in safe water, especially if eaten raw
- Do not use food past its expiry date.



PRACTISE RESPONSIVE FEEDING:

Feed child directly

- Feed infants directly and assist older children when they feed themselves.
- Stay with the child through the meal and be attentive.
- When children are actively fed they eat more and grow and develop better

Feed slowly

- Feed the child slowly and patiently with good humour.
- Encourage your child to eat but do not force them. Be patient!
- Wait when the child stops feeding and then offer more food

Minimise distractions

- Refrain from feeding your child in front of the TV or when interacting with other people.

Communicate during feeding

- Respond positively during feeding with smiles, eye contact and encouraging words.

Variety of foods

- Offer child different food combinations, tastes and textures to encourage them to eat.
- Offer favourite foods and encourage children to eat when they lose interest.

Western Cape Government Health
Facility Based Programmes
Sub-directorate: Integrated Nutrition Programme
Telephone: 021 483 2275



INTRODUCTION TO SOLIDS

Adequate nutrition during infancy and early childhood is important to the development of each child's full potential

0-6 months: Exclusive infant feeding is recommended for the first 6 months of life

Babies need only milk feeds for the first 6 months of life.

Milk continues to be important source of nutrients to children after 6 months.

There is no need to put a time limit on feeds. Allow the baby to feed as often and as long the baby wants.

The use of dummies, bottles and artificial teats are discouraged as they are difficult to clean and carry germs that can make your baby sick.

Key messages and tips on introduction to solids:

- Why we start introducing solids at 6 months and not earlier:

Complementary foods introduced before 6 months replaces milk feeds and can delay optimal growth.

The child's gut is not mature enough to digest solid foods.

The child's jaw and mouth has not completely developed yet for chewing.

- After 6 months it becomes difficult to meet infants' needs from milk feeds alone and solids should be introduced to meet the child's nutritional requirements for good growth and development.
- Pureed and semi solid foods are needed at first until the baby is able to munch (up and down movements of the jaw) or chew (use of teeth).
- When offering your child an inappropriate consistency of food the child is unable to consume enough for good growth or take too long to eat.
- Avoid foods that are not nutritious:
Babies are growing fast and need food filled with good nutrition to grow and develop well.
- Avoid giving your children sweets, chips and sweet cool drinks in place of food.
- Tea, coffee and juice are also not necessary for children to grow. They can damage their teeth and take the place of better foods needed for growth.
- There is no need to buy "special" baby foods, use locally available foods.

Introducing solids:

6-8 Months

When should you start feeding your baby?

- You can introduce your baby to solid foods after he/she has turned 6 months.
- Continue to breastfeed your baby. Offer milk first before food.
- If child refuses food don't force feed, delay feeding until later or the next day.

What food should you start feeding your baby first?

- Add a little breastmilk to the first feed as it's a familiar taste.
- Start by giving your baby pureed food (eg. Pureed carrots) or soft porridge.
- Gradually increase the consistency of the food, from puree to mashed food and by 8 months lumpy foods can be offered.
- Unless advised by your health care worker, do not add salt, sugar, butter or margarine to your baby's food.
- Offer your child small sips of water after meals.
- Take care not to replace your child's milk feeds with tea, cooldrink, juice or other fluids.

How often should your baby get food?

- Start by giving baby food once a day
- Gradually increase to 2 to 3 times a day as your baby grows.

How much food should your baby be eating?

- Start with 1-2 teaspoons of food.
- Gradually increase the amount as your baby grows up to 2 to 3 tablespoons at each meal.

Give your baby only one new food at a time. Wait for 3 to 5 days before introducing another new food. This can help you notice any allergic reactions to a new food.

8-9 months:

What food should your baby be eating now?

- Continue to breastfeed your baby. Start offering food before milk feeds.
- Your baby should be eating lumpy foods (mashed food with pieces)
- Continue giving your baby vegetables and start adding mashed beans, shredded/minced meat, chicken or livers.

- You can also start introducing finger foods
- Offer your child different types of food at each meal.
- Avoid giving your child foods that can cause choking (eg nuts, grapes, raw carrots) – the shape/ consistency can block the child's airway.
- Offer your child small amounts of clean water.
- Take care not to replace your child's milk feeds with tea, cooldrink, juice or other fluids

How much food should your baby be eating now?

- Feed your baby according to his/her appetite.
- Your baby can eat 4-6 heaped tablespoons of food at each meal.

How often should your baby get food now?

- Your baby should be eating 3 times a day.

9-12 months: [increasing the textures and variety]

What food should your baby be eating now?

- Continue to breastfeed your baby. Offer food before milk.
- Start introducing family foods.
- Foods that your baby can pick up and eat on their own.
- In families with known food allergies delay the introduction of eggs until 2 years and peanuts, nuts and fish until 3 years of age.
- Offer your child clean water during the day.
- Take care not to replace your child's milk feeds with tea, cooldrink, juice or other fluids
- Do not give cow's milk to babies before 12 months.

How much food should your baby be eating now?

- Feed your baby according to his/her appetite.
- Your baby can eat about 2/3rd of a cup at each meal.

How often should your baby get food now?

- Your baby should be eating 3 meals as well as one snack during the day.
- Healthy snacks are foods like fruits (cut into pieces), bread or toast with peanut butter or fish paste. Your child should be sharing meal times with the family. Always watch your baby while they eat to prevent choking.