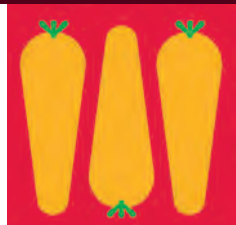


# What stage is your baby at?



Start solids when your baby is ready at around six months of age.  
Do not start solids before four months of age.

Northern NSW  
Local Health District



# Starting smooth

## Around 6 months

### The signs

Your baby is ready for solids when they:

- ✓ Can sit up in a high chair
- ✓ Can hold their head up on their own
- ✓ Show interest in food and people eating
- ✓ Have stopped pushing food out of their mouth. Babies who push food out are not ready.

### Iron rich

Babies need foods that are high in iron to help brain development. Examples are:

- ✓ Iron-fortified infant cereal
- ✓ Grated, pureed or finely chopped beef, lamb, chicken, fish, tofu and eggs.

### Variety

Variety is important. Introduce foods in any order. Include iron rich foods regularly. Examples are:

- ✓ Infant cereals
- ✓ Finely mashed banana or avocado
- ✓ Peeled, cooked and mushy apples and pears
- ✓ Mashed vegies (e.g. pumpkin, sweet potato, carrot)
- ✓ Pureed, grated or finely chopped meats, mashed silken tofu or legumes, or scrambled egg.

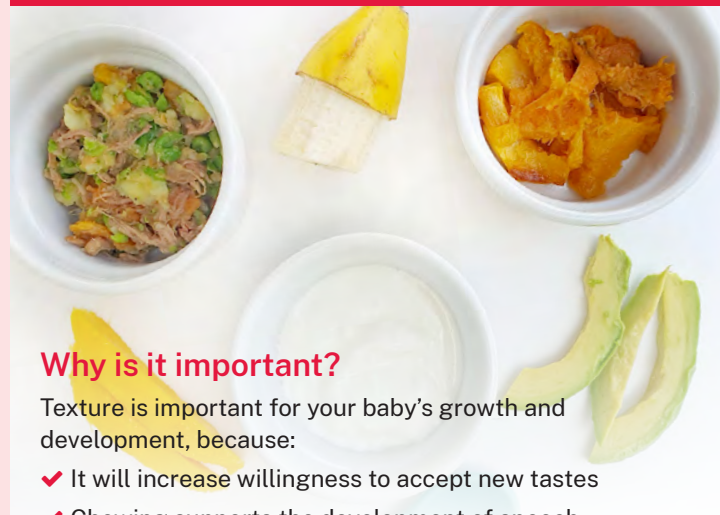
### Drinks

- ✓ Continue breastmilk or formula while introducing food to your baby
- ✓ Introduce a cup with small amounts of cooled, boiled tap water.



# Time for textures

## 6-8 months



### Why is it important?

Texture is important for your baby's growth and development, because:

- ✓ It will increase willingness to accept new tastes
- ✓ Chewing supports the development of speech
- ✓ Trying new foods can reduce the likelihood of allergies.

Introduce new textures based on what you and your baby are comfortable with. This can range from thicker purees and mashed foods to soft finger foods.

### Mashed & lumps

Begin to introduce texture. Examples are:

- ✓ Mashed cooked vegetables and fruit
- ✓ Plain, full fat yoghurt
- ✓ Minced meats
- ✓ Hard boiled eggs (mashed with a fork)
- ✓ Mashed lentils or beans
- ✓ Porridge and couscous.

### First finger foods

These foods should be soft enough to squish between your fingers. Examples are:

- ✓ Soft avocado wedges
- ✓ Mango slices
- ✓ Banana with some of the peel left on to hold
- ✓ Roasted sweet potato or pumpkin wedges
- ✓ Carrot sticks, broccoli or zucchini cooked until soft.

Cut finger foods to the size and shape of your finger. This way baby can hold them and feed themselves.

### Introduce allergenic foods

The common allergy causing foods are: egg, cow's milk, wheat, soy, peanut, tree nuts, sesame, fish and shellfish. Once you've fed your baby these foods, it is important to include them in meals and snacks regularly.

### Drinks

- ✓ Continue to offer a cup with small amounts of cooled, boiled tap water
- ✓ Continue breastmilk or formula feeding.

# Pick and mix

## 8-12 months

### Munch with a slight crunch

Start to feed your baby more finger foods and family meals that aren't blended (but are still soft). Examples are:

- ✓ Thick/dense bread crusts and toast fingers
- ✓ Cheese sticks
- ✓ Cooked pasta, rice or quinoa
- ✓ Slices/pieces of lightly steamed vegetables
- ✓ Slices of soft, peeled fruits
- ✓ Nut pastes or nut butters
- ✓ Small, tender pieces of meat or fish
- ✓ All-in-one meals e.g. casseroles and pasta bakes.

### Continue the iron-rich foods

Brain development continues into adulthood.

### Their growth

- ✓ Continue to introduce new types of foods to support your baby's growth
- ✓ Encourage feeding themselves by holding food or spoons to help develop fine motor skills
- ✓ Avoid foods high in fats, sugars and salt. They provide little nutritional value and can make healthy foods seem less appealing.

### Drinks

- ✓ At around 8 months, give breastmilk/formula after food
- ✓ Continue breastmilk/formula until at least 12 months
- ✓ Continue to offer cooled, boiled tap water in a cup.



# Family foods

## 12 months and above



### Everyday family foods

From 12 months of age, your toddler should be able to eat most family foods.

- ✓ Aim to include a variety of foods from the five food groups each day
- ✓ Offer food every 2-3 hours – that's three meals with small snacks in between
- ✓ Limit grazing so children are hungry at snack and mealtimes.

### Snacks & mini meals

Think of snacks as mini meals and include more than one food group at each snack. Examples are:

- ✓ Yoghurt and fruit
- ✓ Pikelet, nut butter and strawberries
- ✓ Cheese slices, hummus and cucumber sticks
- ✓ Hardboiled egg (cut) and toast fingers
- ✓ Pizza muffins (English muffin with cheese, pasta sauce and vegetable toppings)

### Drinks

- ✓ Breast milk can continue
- ✓ Offer full-cream cow's milk (in a cup)
- ✓ Always offer water (in a cup)
- ✓ Bin the bottles from 12 months.

### Foods to avoid

- ✓ Avoid small, round, hard or slippery foods as they are a choking risk. These include whole nuts and seeds, whole grapes and cherry tomatoes, whole blueberries, cocktail frankfurts and hard candy
- ✓ Continue to avoid foods and drinks high in fats, sugars and salt. They provide little nutritional value and can make healthy foods seem less appealing.

# Fuss Free Mealtimes

Supporting children to learn to enjoy and behave well at meals can start now. This will set them up to be happy eaters for life! Use the following tips to create positive mealtimes.

## Make mealtimes enjoyable

Make mealtimes a nice and pleasant time.

- ✓ Eat meals as a family. Allow enough time to enjoy meals together
- ✓ Talk calmly and positively
- ✓ Try eating in other places (like a backyard picnic).

## Parent provides, child decides

When you do your job with mealtimes, your child will learn to do theirs.

- ✓ A parent's job is to provide the food and choose when and where a child will eat
- ✓ A child's job is to decide if they will eat and how much to eat
- ✓ Avoid offering alternatives for uneaten meals
- ✓ Taking time to like foods is part of normal development.

## Trust their tummies

Let the decision to stop eating be theirs. Children naturally stop when they are full.

- ✓ Resist pressuring your child to eat and avoid force feeding, coaxing or bribing
- ✓ Provide small serves and offer more if still hungry
- ✓ If your child is full, accept their decision to stop eating.

## Stick to a simple routine

Children love routine. Having a food routine helps children know what to expect.

- ✓ Offer food at similar times each day
- ✓ Have a before meal routine with a 'pack up' or 'get ready' warning and wash hands.

## Repeat, repeat, repeat

It can take over 10 times for a child to accept a new food, so keep offering it.

- ✓ Offer new food next to food your child already likes
- ✓ Introduce one new food at a time
- ✓ Try separating foods so they are not touching
- ✓ Cook foods in different ways.



## Be a positive role model

Your family is your child's first teacher.

- ✓ Model eating and enjoying a variety of foods together
- ✓ Eat as a family serving the same food to everyone
- ✓ Don't 'yuck my yum', everyone has different tastes. Be respectful about food.
- ✓ Try not to overreact in what you say or with body language.

## Avoid distraction

Parents and children can both be distracted at mealtimes.

- ✓ Switch off all screens including TV, iPad and phone and put toys away
- ✓ Use mealtimes as a chance to talk.

## Food isn't a good reward

Using food as a reward can change a child's relationship with food.

- ✓ Avoid food rewards like "if you don't eat your vegetables, you won't get dessert"
- ✓ If looking to reward behaviour, try non-food-based rewards like extra play time, a visit to the park or reading a special book.

## Involve children

Children are more likely to try food they have explored in some way.

- ✓ Let children feed themselves – mess is okay
- ✓ Involve children in vegetable gardening, shopping, cooking and food play
- ✓ Encourage smelling, touching and tasting familiar and unfamiliar foods.

For more information visit:

PICNIC  
[www.picnicproject.com.au](http://www.picnicproject.com.au)

Nip Allergies in the Bub  
[www.preventallergies.org.au](http://www.preventallergies.org.au)

Or book an appointment with your child and family health nurse