



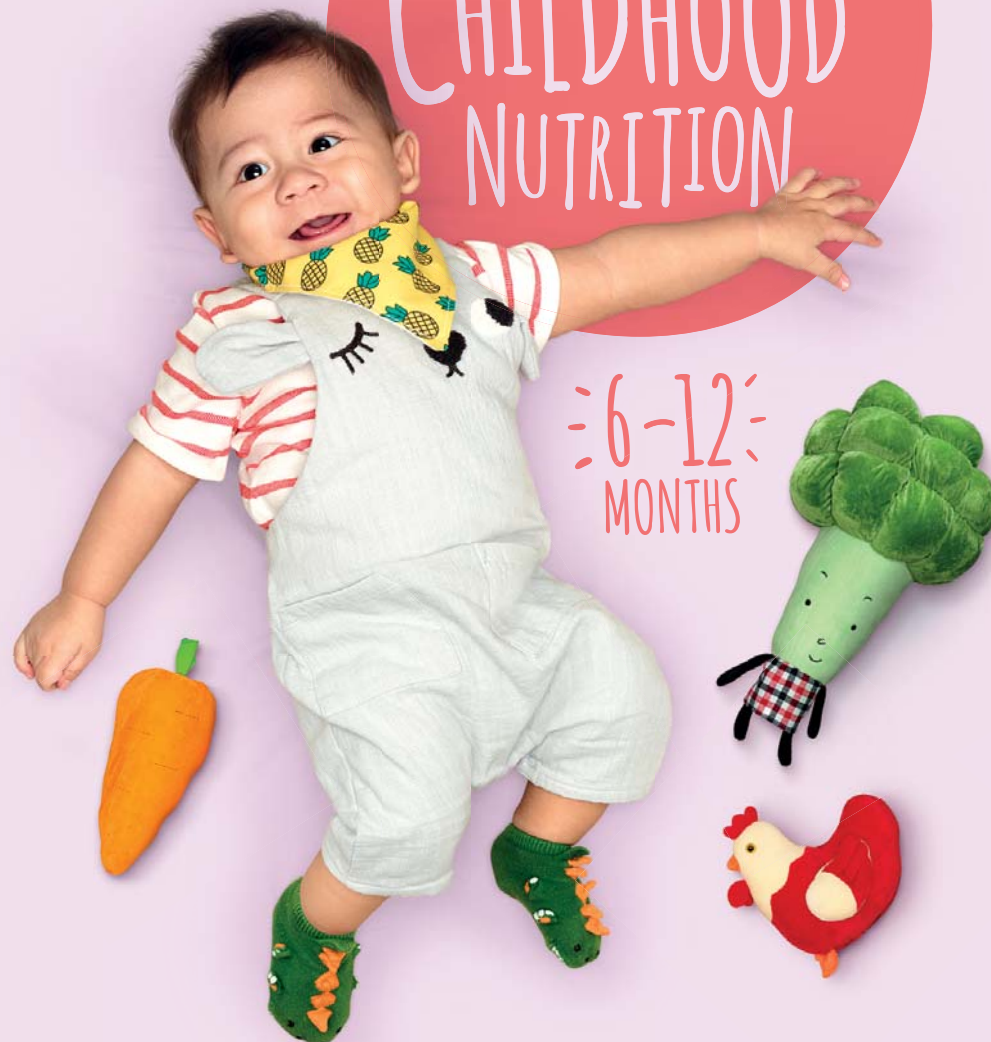
Health
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[HEALTHHUB.SG/EARLYNUTRITION](https://healthhub.sg/earlynutrition)



A MUM'S GUIDE TO EARLY CHILDHOOD NUTRITION

6-12
MONTHS





Now that your baby's 6 months old, he is ready to start eating solid foods. While milk should still be his staple, he will need other foods to:

- Help develop his motor skills (chewing, biting, sucking and swallowing).
- Provide various nutrients for his growth and development.
- Experience different textures and taste – he is less likely to become a picky eater if he's exposed to a variety of foods at an early age.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY BABY'S READY TO WEAN?

At around 4 to 6 months, your baby will display these signs that indicate he is ready to wean:

- Sits up against the back of the chair and can hold his head up with some support.
- Reaches out his hands to grasp objects.
- Shows interest in food.
- Opens his mouth for a spoon, then close his lips over it when placed in his mouth.
- Wants to chew and put objects in his mouth.
- Seems hungry even after a milk feed.

Some babies require more time to get used to solid foods. If your baby keeps pushing the spoon out with his tongue or appears to have difficulty swallowing solids, wait for another week and try again. It's normal for food to spill out from the sides of your baby's mouth initially. This will improve progressively as he develops better control of his oral muscles.

HOW DO I INTRODUCE SOLIDS TO MY BABY?

Start your baby on solids gradually by introducing one new feed every 3 – 4 days and monitor him for any allergic reactions. Should your baby develop any allergies during weaning, take note of the food that caused the reaction and see a paediatrician immediately.

BABY'S FIRST FOODS

LIST OF SUITABLE

FOODS BY AGE

5 MONTHS

Ikan Bilis



Fish



Apple



Cabbage



Banana



Carrot



Peas



Soybean



Potato



Broccoli



7 MONTHS

Eggs



Chicken



Pumpkin



Spinach



Bread



Rice



Tomato



Sweet Potato



Tofu



Eggplant



Pasta



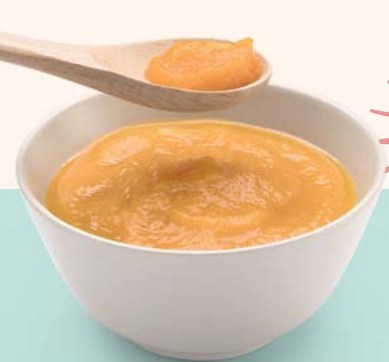
9 MONTHS

At this stage, your baby's iron stores are almost depleted and it is important that his first weaning foods are rich in iron. As such, you may want to begin weaning him with iron-fortified rice cereals.

Vegetables and fruit can also be given to provide vitamin C, which enhances iron absorption. Other suitable food choices include porridge blended with mashed or pureed vegetables such as pumpkin, sweet potato and carrot.

As your baby grows older, his ability to chew and bite will develop. You can then introduce other grains such as fine oat, barley and wheat, as well as cooked strained vegetables, soft mashed fruits and soft protein-rich food such as tofu or cooked, mashed lentils and finely flaked fish. You may also start adding finely minced meat and shredded poultry, such as beef, chicken, pork and lamb, to his diet.

Lastly, since your baby has now started eating solids, he may also need extra fluids. You can give him water with meals or breast/formula milk after meals.



TEXTURE & FORM

At around 6 months, your baby's food should be smooth, soft and fine (as shown below). As he grows older and his chewing abilities develop, the food texture can become thicker and coarser. At around 10 – 12 months, the food you give him needs to only be mashed, chopped or cut into small pieces.

HERE'S A GUIDE TO HELP YOU DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATE TEXTURE FOR YOUR BABY'S FOOD:

ABOUT 6 MONTHS

1-2 YEARS



HOW MUCH SHOULD I FEED MY BABY?



In the early stages, start by giving him 1 – 2 teaspoons of solids. Slowly increase the amount to 1 – 2 tablespoons, 2 – 3 times a day. As your baby gets used to weaning, you can gradually increase the portion size, eventually making it a full meal that can replace one of his milk feeds. Once your baby is around 10 – 12 months, he can be offered three meals of solids a day.

HERE'S A GUIDE ON THE RECOMMENDED DAILY SERVINGS AND FOOD PORTIONS TO FEED YOUR BABY:

FOOD GROUPS

SERVINGS AND PORTION SIZES PER DAY

BROWN RICE AND WHOLEMEAL BREAD

4 slices of bread



OR

1 bowl of rice/noodles/bee hoon



OR

2 large potatoes



FRUIT

(Fruit should not be used to replace vegetables in the diet or vice versa because they contain different types of nutrients.)

1/2 banana/apple/orange/mango



OR

1/2 wedge of pineapple/papaya/watermelon



VEGETABLES

3/8 mug of vegetables



MEAT AND OTHERS

1/2 palm size of meat



OR

1 block of beancurd



OR

3/8 cup of legumes



MILK

500 – 750ml/ 2 – 3 cups



PAY ATTENTION TO HIS BOWEL MOVEMENT, HEIGHT AND WEIGHT TO ENSURE THAT HE'S EATING WELL.



WHAT SHOULD I NOT FEED MY BABY?

To help your little one appreciate and accept the natural flavours of food, don't add sugar, salt or seasoning when preparing his food. Babies need less than one gram of salt per day until they are 12 months old. Any more than this and their kidneys may not be able to cope.



Cow's milk should not be given to infants below 12 months because its nutritional content is unsuitable for them. It is low in iron and high in solutes that could damage an infant's kidneys. Honey (on its own or in products such as cakes) should also not be given as infants are unable to digest the bacteria found in honey. Consuming honey could lead to infant botulism.

FOOD AND DRINKS TO AVOID

- Fish with high levels of mercury – such as shark, swordfish, marlin, tuna (includes bluefin, big eyes, albacore yellowfin series), king mackerel, orange roughy, yellowback seabream and dash-and-dot goatfish.
- Any uncooked food and unpasteurised milk products.
- Food that leads to choking easily – such as:
 - Small and hard pieces of food (e.g. corn, peanuts, nuts, seeds and grapes)
 - Crunchy or hard food (e.g. uncooked vegetables)
 - Fish and meat with bones
 - Fruits with seeds
 - Sticky food (e.g. glutinous rice dumpling)
- Salt, soy sauce, chicken powder – limit food that are high in salt content as this may increase his future risk of high blood pressure. Use ginger or spring onion as alternatives for seasoning.
- Sugared drinks, soft drinks or fruit juice.
- Caffeinated drinks such as energy drinks, coffee or tea.



FOOD ALLERGY SYMPTOMS

In general, symptoms may occur within several hours or days after eating the food. It is best to observe your baby's reaction(s) closely, especially after introducing a new food.

Common symptoms that occur within several hours:

- Hives, worsening eczema
- Swollen eyes, tongue, face, mouth and lips
- Watery stools
- Vomiting

Relatively rare but serious symptoms include:

- Difficulty in breathing
- Fainting

For some babies, they may have an allergic reaction 1 or 2 days later (e.g. eczema, wheezing, persistent vomiting, constipation, stomach pain). So do keep a lookout and see a paediatrician immediately if your baby displays any of these reactions.



HOW LONG CAN COOKED FOOD LAST IN A THERMAL FLASK?

In general, a small thermal flask cannot store food at a safe temperature (60 degrees or above) for a long period. To reduce the risk of bacterial growth, food stored in a thermal flask should be eaten within two hours after it is cooked.



ON THE MENU TODAY

Sample daily meal plan for babies: **6-9 MONTHS** (smooth and lumpy food)

To get you started, here are some sample daily menus to give you an indication of the types of food you can prepare for your baby. Please note that these plans serve as a guide only. Do feed your baby according to his appetite. Let him decide whether he wants to eat and how much to eat, as he will be able to regulate his own milk or food intake.



RISE & SHINE



EARLY MORNING SNACK

150ml breast/formula milk.



TUMMY TIME



BREAKFAST

3-4 tablespoons* of brown rice cereal mixed with 60ml breast/formula milk and 1/4 medium banana (pureed).



BATH TIME

MID-MORNING SNACK

180ml breast/formula milk.



AFTERNOON SNACK

180ml breast/formula milk.



PLAY TIME



LUNCH

1/4 - 3/4 bowl** of porridge with minced chicken (23g) and mashed pumpkin (25g).



NAP TIME



NAP TIME



DINNER

1/4 - 3/4 bowl** of porridge mixed with 1/2 small block of mashed tofu (43g) and mashed broccoli (25g). 1/4 small pear (scraped).



READING TIME



SUPPER

180ml breast/formula milk.



TOTAL SERVINGS

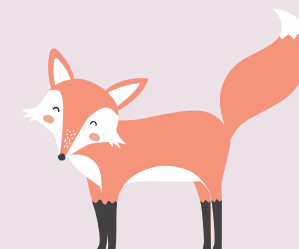
Brown rice and wholemeal bread	Fruit	Vegetables	Meat and others	Milk
1-2	1/2	1/2	1/2	500-750ml

*1 tablespoon = 15g
**Rice bowl



ON THE MENU TODAY

Sample daily meal plan for babies: **10-12 MONTHS** (mashed, chopped and cut food)



RISE
& SHINE



EARLY
MORNING
SNACK

150ml breast/
formula milk.



PLAY
TIME



BREAKFAST

3 – 4 tablespoons* of oat
cereal mixed with 60ml
breast/formula milk OR
1 slice of wholemeal bread
with ½ mashed egg yolk.
¼ wedge cut papaya.

BATH
TIME



MID-MORNING
SNACK

180ml breast/
formula milk.



AFTERNOON
SNACK

180ml breast/
formula milk.



PLAY
TIME



LUNCH

¼ – ¾ bowl** of
porridge with ½
small block of diced
tofu (43g) and finely
chopped chye
sim (25g).



NAP
TIME



NAP
TIME



DINNER

¼ – ¾ baked/mashed large potato
(45 – 135g) mixed with cooked
minced/chopped chicken (23g),
½ finely grated carrot (15g) and
⅓ finely chopped tomato (15g).
¼ wedge cut watermelon.

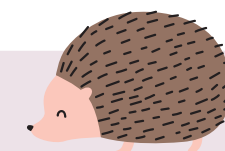


READING
TIME



SUPPER

180ml breast/
formula milk.



TOTAL SERVINGS



Brown rice and wholemeal bread	Fruit	Vegetables	Meat and others	Milk
1 – 2	½	½	½	500 – 750ml

*1 tablespoon = 15g
**Rice bowl



RECIPES FOR YOUR LITTLE ONE

As your baby begins his journey to discover solid foods, here are some nutritious and yummy recipes to get you started.

PUMPKIN & SALMON RICE PORRIDGE

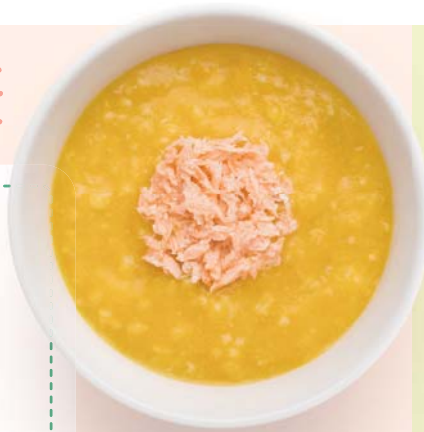
6-9 MONTHS

INGREDIENTS *(Makes 1 baby portion)*

- 3 tbsp of pumpkin, skin and seeds removed, cut into 1cm cubes
- 2 tbsp flaked salmon
- 1½ bowl thin porridge

METHOD:

- Steam pumpkin cubes for 10 – 15 minutes until soft. Mash pumpkin and fish together using a fork. Set aside.
- Bring porridge to a boil. Stir in mashed fish and pumpkin. Lower to medium heat.
- Cook for another 2 minutes and serve.



COOKING TIP:

Instead of pumpkin, you can use any melon-type or root vegetables such as winter melon, palm melon, sweet potatoes, carrots, etc.



RICE CEREAL WITH SPINACH & EGG YOLK

6-9 MONTHS

INGREDIENTS *(Makes 1 baby portion)*

- 6 level tbsp infant rice cereal
- 160ml breast/formula milk
- 5 pieces of spinach leaves
- ½ egg yolk

METHOD:

- Wash the spinach and soak in water for 1 hour. Blanch in water. Drain and chop finely and grind through a strainer to make a smooth vegetable puree.
- Place an egg in a pot. Add water and bring to a boil. Cook the egg for 10 minutes until done. Remove egg shell and take out ½ the egg yolk.
- Mash with a fork and mix with a small amount of water to form a puree.
- Mix milk with baby rice cereal as directed on packaging. Add vegetable and egg yolk puree and mix well to serve.



HEALTHY EATING TIP:

Most infant rice cereals are enriched with iron. This is an important source of iron for babies who are not ready to eat meat.

CHICKEN & MUSHROOM PIE

10-12 MONTHS



INGREDIENTS *(Makes about 6 baby portions)*

- 1 large potato, peeled and diced
- 1 tbsp breast/formula milk
- 1 tsp cooking oil
- ½ small onion, peeled and diced
- 4 mushrooms, diced
- 2 tbsp frozen vegetables (carrot, corn, green peas)
- 100g chicken breast, diced
- 100ml water
- 1 tsp corn flour
- 1 tbsp soft cheese

METHOD

- Boil the potato in water until tender. Drain well. Add the milk and mash.
- In a pan, heat the oil and fry the diced onion for several minutes to soften.
- Add the diced mushrooms, frozen vegetables, chicken and water and cook for 15 minutes until the chicken is cooked.
- Blend the corn flour with a little water to make a smooth paste and add to the mixture. Bring to the boil and cook for a few minutes to thicken the mixture.
- Add the mashed potato and soft cheese. Mix well.
- Chop or mash to the desired consistency.



CARROT & LENTIL SOUP

10-12 MONTHS

INGREDIENTS *(Makes 6 baby portions)*

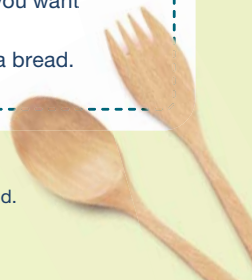
- ½ tbsp cooking oil
- ½ small onion, peeled and diced
- ½ tsp finely chopped garlic/garlic paste
- 1 large carrot, peeled and diced
- 50g dried lentils
- 300ml water

METHOD

- Heat the oil in a large pan, add the onion, garlic and carrots and fry gently. Stir regularly for 5 minutes.
- Add the lentils and water and bring to the boil, stirring occasionally.
- Simmer for about 20 minutes with a lid on until the lentils are soft.
- Mash to make the soup texture you want and cool before serving.
- You may serve the soup with pita bread.

HEALTHY EATING TIP:

Including mashed vegetables in soups is a good way to increase your child's vegetable intake. You can use pumpkin or sweet potato instead of carrots if desired.



IN SUMMARY

Now that your baby has begun weaning, here are some key takeaways to help you along his journey as he discovers the world of solids.

#1



Start your baby on solids gradually by introducing one new food every 3 – 4 days.

#2



As your baby's iron stores begins to deplete, it is important that his first weaning foods are rich in iron.

#3



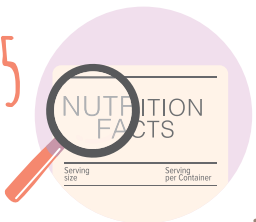
Always observe your baby for allergic reactions whenever you introduce him to a new food.

#4



Texture and form is important. His initial foods should be smooth, soft and fine.

#5



Provide your baby with the recommended number of servings of food so he can get all the nutrients he needs.

#6



When preparing your baby's food, do not add sugar, salt, or seasoning.



BABY JUST TURNED



WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that your child is 1 year old, his digestive system is ready to accept small portions of food. Although he is able to eat the same foods as adults, breast or formula milk is still an important part of his diet.

To ensure that your toddler gets all the nutrients he needs, it is important that his meals are balanced. So, always include all four food groups (fruit, vegetables, grains, meat and alternatives) in his meals and prepare them with minimal salt, sugar or seasoning.

Also, don't worry if he's not eating much. It's normal for his growth and appetite to slow down at this age, so let him choose how much to eat.

For a full guide on your baby's stage 3 nutritional needs, refer to the next booklet in our series – **A Mum's Guide To Early Childhood Nutrition: 1 – 2 years old**



WE'RE HERE
FOR YOU

For more on weaning and
early childhood nutrition, visit
healthhub.sg/earlynutrition



You may also reach out to any of these support groups.

Breastfeeding Mothers' Support Group (Singapore)

- 📞 Counselling hotline 6339 3558
- ✉ Email contact@breastfeeding.org.sg
- 🌐 Website www.breastfeeding.org.sg

Joyful Parenting and Breastfeeding

- 📞 Hotline 6488 0286
- ✉ Email joyfulparenting@gmail.com

Parentline

- 📞 Hotline 6289 8811

Childcare Services

- 📞 Hotline 6258 5812
- 🌐 Website www.childcarelink.gov.sg

