10 STEPS FOR

Feeding Babies
0-12 months

1. Breastfeeding helps protect your baby from illness
   - It may take time for you both to learn how it works best for you - ask for help if you need it.

2. Give breast milk, the best option, or infant formula for at least 12 months

3. Begin a vitamin D supplement from birth
   - As milk and foods do not necessarily provide enough.

4. Let your baby decide how much milk to drink
   - Offer a feed when your baby is hungry and remember babies cry for reasons other than hunger.

5. Begin to offer food alongside their milk feeds, by 6 months but not before 4 months
   - When you think your baby is ready for more.

6. Offer high iron foods from beginning of complementary feeding (weaning)
   - (weaning) - meat, oily fish, eggs, pulses and nut butters.

7. Offer spoon-feeding, soft finger foods and a cup of water
   - At all meals so that your baby develops all their feeding skills.

8. Stop feeding when your baby shows you he or she has had enough
   - By keeping his mouth closed or turning away from food or milk.

9. Introduce allergenic foods one at a time, from 4 to 6 months
   - Dairy foods (cow’s milk, yogurt, cheese), egg, nut butters, fish, wheat-based foods and foods with soya or sesame.

10. Move onto thick mash with soft lumps between 6 and 8 months
    - And onto minced and chopped family foods and firm finger foods between 9 and 12 months.
**RESPONSIVE FEEDING:**
- Offer food or milk when your baby is hungry
- Stop when your baby signals they have had enough food or milk by:
  - keeping their mouth shut
  - turning away from, or pushing away, a spoon, nipple or teat
  - holding food in their mouth

**FEEDING SKILLS TAKE TIME TO LEARN AND PERFECT**
- Babies develop them at different rates
- Practice makes perfect but this can be tiring and a little each day is enough
- Your smiling encouraging face will help
- Offer both spoon feeding and finger foods
- Gagging or coughing back lumps is part of learning
- Offering water from a lidded cup without a valve means learning to sip
- Always stay with your baby when they are eating or drinking

**BEGIN WITH SAVOURY TASTES THAT ARE HIGH IN IRON AND ENERGY**
Combine:
- 1/3 high iron foods: meat/fish/eggs/nut butter/pulses (lentils, hummus, starchy beans)
- 1/3 starchy food: potato/rice/pasta/bread
- 1/3 vegetables

Keep the sweet tastes of fruit and yogurt for a second course – don’t mix them into the savoury course

**FINGER FOODS HELP BABIES TO:**
- develop their self-feeding skills
- learn to recognise foods and
- learn to like single tastes

Babies’ gums contain their teeth and are hard enough for chewing – you do not need to wait for the teeth to come through

**SOFT FINGER FOODS FROM EARLY IN WEANING**
- Soft roasted, steamed or boiled vegetable sticks, e.g. carrot, courgette, parsnip, pepper, potato and sweet potato
- Cooked vegetable pieces, e.g. cauliflower and broccoli florets
- Soft ripe fruit pieces, e.g. mango, melon, banana, pear, peach, papaya and kiwi
- Cooked pasta pieces
- Soft toast crusts
- Soft cheese sticks
- Pieces of fish or fish and potato cake - remove any bones

**FIRMER FINGER FOODS FROM AROUND 9 MONTHS**
- Pieces of raw fruit e.g. plums, apricots, strawberries pieces, apples
- Fruits with the pips or stones removed e.g. halved cherries, halved grapes, and segments of oranges, satsumas, and clementines
- Raw vegetables: sticks of cucumber, carrot, peppers, courgette
- Crusts of bread or toast, rice cakes, crackers, oatcakes, bread sticks
- Pitta bread strips with hummus or nut butter
- Sandwiches with soft fillings
- Pieces of hard boiled egg or omelette
- Cheddar cheese pieces
- Soft cooked pieces of meat loaf, burger, chicken, falafel, bhaji and other very soft, slow cooked meat

NB: Avoid soft round pieces of food e.g. cherry tomatoes, whole grapes, rounds of sausage – cut them in half so they are not round

A small number of infants may take much longer to learn to accept and manage these tastes and textures – keep offering them

**PRETERM BABIES**
- Discuss when to begin with your baby’s medical team – it is usually around four to six months after their EDD
- Introduce foods in the same way as for term babies
- Some preterm babies may need extra support for sitting and keeping their head upright

Interested in finding out more? Visit www.infantandtoddlerforum.org

If you have any questions or concerns about your infant’s health speak to your GP or health visitor.

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The Infant & Toddler Forum CIC is committed to a world where every child has the healthiest start in life. November 2019