

# Introducing Solid foods to your baby

Is your baby approaching 6 months or 26 weeks?

Lets think about food!

Baby can sit with minimal support and hold their head steady

How do you know if your baby is ready?

Baby can take food into their mouth, move it around and chew and swallow it safely. Before six months babies push food back out of their mouths because they cannot swallow safely

Baby can co-ordinate their eyes, hands and mouth, reaching out to pick up food and bringing it to their mouths by themselves.

## Signs that may be mistaken for readiness to start solid foods

- Babies love to watch you and to try and copy. Watching you eat is an important stage of development but before six months it is not a sign of readiness for food
- Night waking or frequent feeding may lead you to think that baby needs more . Before six months, these are signs that your baby needs more milk frequently and giving solid foods instead won't help your baby to sleep or to go longer between feeds. They also wake for many other reasons.



It's only a taste to begin with. How much they take is less important than getting babies used to the idea of eating.

# First foods!

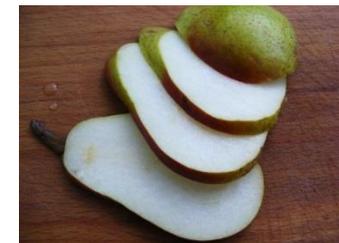
Most nutrition will still come from breast or formula milk



It can get quite messy!  
Try to relax and enjoy your baby exploring new tastes and textures



Start by offering mashed or soft cooked sticks of fruit and vegetables such as carrot, parsnip, broccoli, potato, apple, pear, banana and avocado.





## What milk and when?

- Only Mum's milk or formula for the first six months.
- Then Mum's milk or infant formula alongside food from 6-12 months
- Whole cow's milk can be mixed with food from 6 months in cereal or homemade sauces.
- Whole cow's milk can be given as a drink from one year.
- Carry on with Mum's milk for as long as you both want.

# Next foods!

Once baby is taking the first foods well you can start to add new foods such as:

Soft cooked meats and fish.  
(chicken/flaked fish such as salmon, well cooked mince, casseroles)

Full fat dairy products such as yoghurt, custard and rice pudding. Choose products with No added sugar or less sugar.



Pasta, noodles, rice.  
Toast/pieces of chapatti, lentils and eggs.

Smooth peanut butter  
from 6 months (if no allergies)



# Cups

- Introduce a cup from six months and offer sips of water with meals
- Using an open cup or free flow cup without a valve will help your baby learn to sip and these are better for your baby's teeth.



# Food from 8-9 months

Gradually increase the number of meals offered, aiming towards 3 meals a day



Offer a mixture of soft finger foods, mashed meals and chopped foods

Include food from all the main food groups - fruits, vegetables, dairy, carbohydrates and protein

Don't forget to increase the texture – if lumps aren't introduced by 9 months babies can be reluctant to take them later on and this can affect speech development in the future

# Around 12 months



By now most babies will be eating 3 meals a day and 2 snacks

Little snacks between meals could be hummus and vegetable sticks, cheese, rice cakes, crackers, fruit, breadsticks.

They can now have whole cows milk to drink from a beaker or cup. Ideally at this stage you can dispose of any bottles.

## Foods to avoid



- Honey is not suitable for babies under one year of age because of the increased risk of infant botulism
- Salt should not be used in cooking or added to food
- Sweet foods – cakes, biscuits, chocolate



- Whole nuts until 5 years of age due to being a choking hazard
- Sweet drinks such as juice, squash or fizzy drinks
- No swordfish, shark or marlin due to increased levels of mercury as this affects the nervous system.
- Eggs without the red lion stamp have to be hard boiled (including duck, goose and quail eggs).
- Low fat foods



# Oral Health



- Brush teeth as soon as they appear, using a toothpaste with 1000 parts per million (ppm) of fluoride up to the age of three. After 3 years a toothpaste containing 1300-1400 ppm should be used.
- Brush teeth twice daily
- Sweet and sugary foods should be given as part of a meal and remember tooth friendly snacks
- Visit the dentist

Offer nutritious higher energy snacks such as breadsticks dipped in hummus/soft cheese/avocado, toast and butters.



## Vegetarian babies

Provide breakfast cereals fortified with iron

Diets can be low in energy, iron and protein. To avoid this include non dairy sources of protein such as eggs, lentils, beans, soya mince and quorn.

# Vegan babies

Please refer to



- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/vegetarian-vegan-children/>
- <https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/>

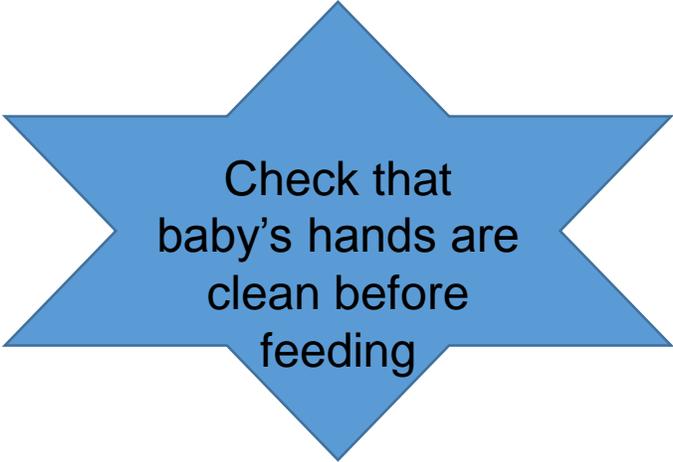
Advice on introducing your baby to solid foods from around 6 months is the same for vegetarian and vegan babies as it is for non-vegetarian babies.



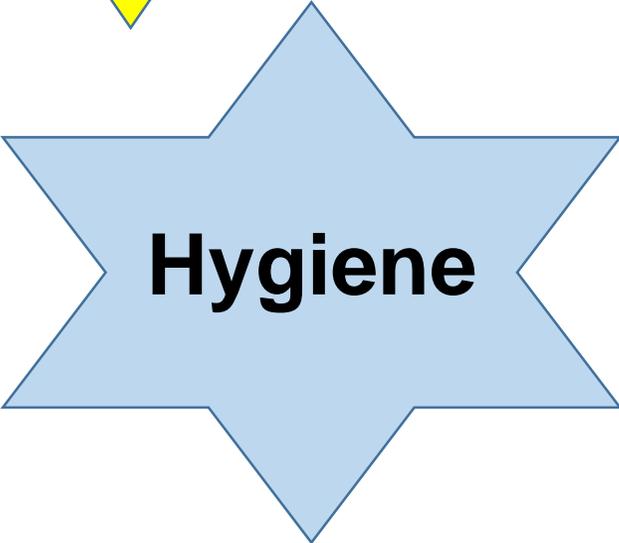
Always wash and dry your hands before preparing your baby's foods



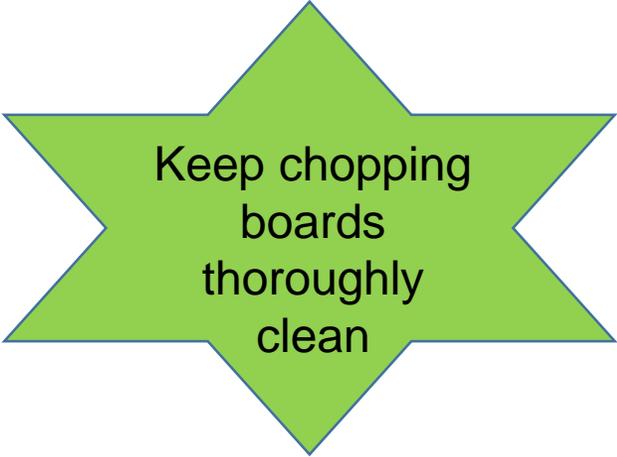
Wash all fruits and vegetables



Check that baby's hands are clean before feeding



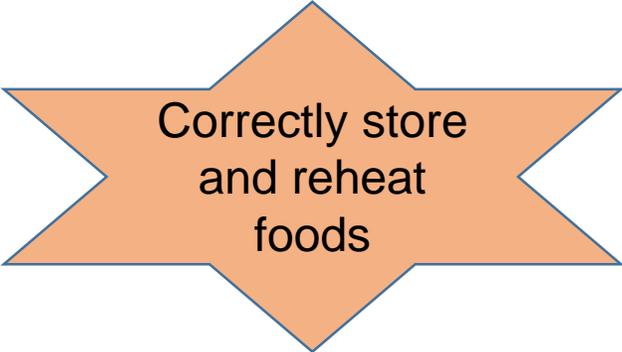
## Hygiene



Keep chopping boards thoroughly clean



Keep surfaces clean and prevent pets from coming near food or surfaces where food is prepared or eaten



Correctly store and reheat foods

# Eat together!

- Babies enjoy watching you eat and learn from being part of family meal times. Help them join in by talking to them and giving them food when you or the rest of the family are eating.
- Having meal times around the same time every day can make it easier for your baby to know when to expect food.
- Don't worry if your baby hasn't eaten much in a meal or a day, what they eat over a week is more important.
- Most babies know when they are full up so don't make them finish a portion when they don't want to.
- Homemade is best!

# Choking

- Choking can happen with hard foods, bones, small round foods and foods with skins like sausages.
- Cut round foods such as grapes and cherry tomatoes into quarters or dice them.
- Peel the skin off fruit, vegetables and sausages and remove all bones from meat and fish.
- Remember to always sit with your baby when they are eating to ensure they don't choke.
- Learn how to deal with choking by visiting [www.nhs.uk/choking-baby](http://www.nhs.uk/choking-baby) or even better do a first aid course.

# Gagging vs. Choking

learn the difference - save a life

## Gagging:

-Child will open mouth and thrust tongue forward. Face may appear bright red.

-Child will sputter and cough. (Good signs- means they are working it out.)

Children have a very heightened gag reflex, designed to keep them safe from choking.

**DO NOT INTERFERE WITH A GAGGING CHILD - THIS CAN LEAD TO ACTUAL CHOKING.**

**LET THEM WORK IT OUT!**

## Choking:

-Child will begin to turn blue

-Child will be silent & unable to make noise

-Child may begin coughing if it is a partial blockage. (This is a good sign they are clearing their passage)

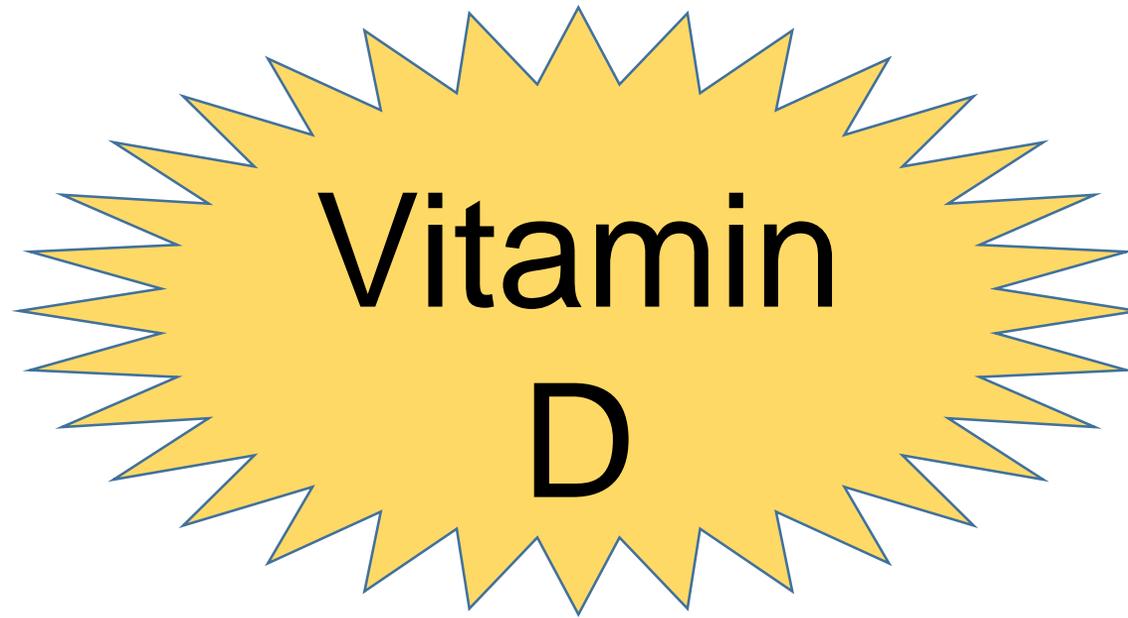
If child is silent and turning blue, proceed using standard first aid measures to dislodge the blockage

*Learn more about first aid measures & find a class:  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)*

**REMEMBER:**

**Loud and Red, let them go ahead.**

**Silent and Blue, they need help from you!**

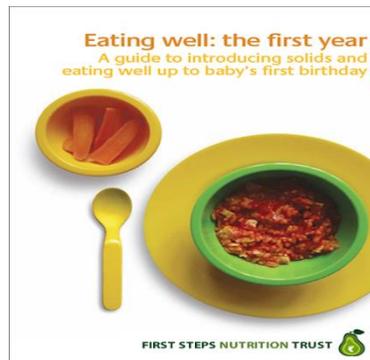
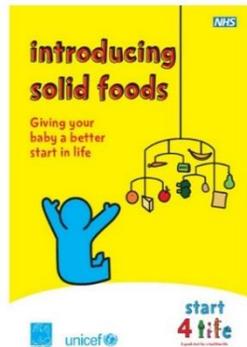


# Vitamin D

- Vitamin D is important for healthy bones, muscles and teeth and our main source is from sunlight.
- For breastfed babies a vitamin D supplement is recommended from birth.
- Due to many people's lack of exposure to the sun, the Department of Health recommends that formula fed babies who get less than 500ml of formula per day are given vitamin D3.
- The daily supplement should contain 10µg of vitamin D3.
- Please speak to your pharmacist or ask at your children's centre.

# Resources

- [www.firststepsnutrition.org](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org)
- [www.nhs.uk/start4life.org](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life.org) – Introducing solid foods/Videos
- [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)
- [www.cwt.org.uk](http://www.cwt.org.uk) – portion size
- [www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk) >choking-prevention
- <https://www.wiltshirechildrensservices.co.uk/health-visiting/>





If you require any further advice or support from either a Health Visitor or Community Nursery Nurse:

Please contact our Single Point of Access (SPA) on **0300 247 0090**  
(Monday to Friday 9:00am-5:00pm)

Alternatively email us on **[vcl.wiltshirespa@nhs.net](mailto:vcl.wiltshirespa@nhs.net)**

### **CORONAVIRUS (COVID 19)**

It is important that children and young people are still able to access community health care services, and **we encourage families to continue to refer to our services** during this time. For more information, as well as a list of online resources that may help during the pandemic, visit <https://wiltshirechildrensservices.co.uk/coronavirus/>