

A young child with dark skin and hair is sitting cross-legged, looking directly at the camera. The child is wearing a short-sleeved shirt with blue and white horizontal stripes and a blue collar. The shirt features colorful cartoon characters, including a blue bird-like creature and a green frog. To the right of the child, there is a large, vibrant pile of various fruits, including bananas, oranges, and grapes. Below the fruit pile, there is a small bowl containing a dark, textured substance, possibly a snack or food item. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.



Right Food at the Right Time, To Make My Baby Healthy and Bright



Proper nutrition in early childhood is a big investment
toward a successful future.

You can make your baby intelligent, healthy and active
by providing safe, nutritious food in correct amounts
and frequency for the age.

Complementary Feeding

What are complementary foods?

- Foods that are given **in addition to breast milk**.
- To complement breast milk as breast milk alone is not enough for the rapidly growing and active child **after 6 months** of age.
- Complementary foods provide additional nutrients and energy needed for best possible growth, brain development and health after 6 months of age.
- While complementary foods at the correct time, in sufficient amounts are needed, breast milk also need to be given as appropriate for age together with food for 2 years and beyond.

Please follow these instructions carefully from the very beginning to make feeding your baby easy and pleasant

Unless trained on feeding pattern and habits as appropriate for the age from the very beginning, the baby will tend to develop wrong dietary habits very quickly. As a result feeding will become increasingly difficult and problematic with age and the growth also will get affected.

Therefore start training the baby on correct feeding habits from the very first day of starting complementary food. Gradually the baby needs to become used to eating nutritious food more or less similar to adult food by one year of age.

The meals need to be changed almost daily in keeping with the age of the baby as shown in this booklet. It will encourage the baby to eat well and also helps brain growth.

Preparing the baby for a meal

- When hungry, a baby will take the meals willingly. Learn the way your baby shows signs of hunger. Let the baby become hungry before the meal.

For a baby to become hungry

- Give the age appropriate number of meals while keeping a suitable time interval between meals.
 - Frequent snacking and frequent milk feeds will make the children feel full and not hungry enough for meals.
 - Babies get addicted to sweet and salty tastes and excessively oily food. If such food items are taken frequently or in large quantities babies will not get hungry for the age appropriate meals.
 - Keeping the baby active by playing, helping you in kitchen, household activities and gardening etc. as deemed suitable for the age will make the child become hungry.
- Have a designated place with minimum distraction for the baby to eat.
 - Have a separate plate, cup and spoon for the baby.

When you feed the baby

- Train the baby to wash hands before feeding and to have the meal sitting at one place from the very beginning of starting complementary food.

Important – Wash hands before preparing baby's food and feeding the baby.



- Do not feed the baby while walking around the house or garden or deviating the baby's attention by television, mobile phones or other screen devices.
- Have loving eye to eye contact while feeding.
- Let the baby eat slowly while talking to him. As suitable for the baby's age.
 - Tell a small story.
 - Introduce different tastes.
 - Name different colours of food.
 - Show different food shapes.
 - Count the number of mouthfuls of food etc.



- Remember that the baby is still learning to eat. Be patient.
- Let the baby learn how to eat.
 - Let the baby also handle food while eating.
 - Let the baby pick small pieces of food and put into his/her mouth
 - Let the baby handle the spoon and cup.
- Get the baby used to regular meal times gradually.
- Whenever possible eat together as a family.
- Set an example to the baby. Avoid frequent snacking. Have a regular place to sit and eat and avoid doing other activities during meals.

Points to note when preparing food for the baby

- Giving the same food daily may lead to food refusal.
- Try to add variety to meals without much extra effort.
 - From 6 months to 1 year of age gradually increase the consistency (particle size) of food daily.
 - When cooking try to change the taste, consistency, colour, method of cooking etc. to add variety to the meals.
 - Add variety by preparing different meals / dishes differently such as cooked with coconut milk, fried or tempered, 'mellum', salad etc. with less spices as suitable for the age.
 - Can give as a curry with a single food item or as a mix of several food items with different items mixed on different days.
 - Whenever the time permits try to prepare something special and nutritious at home. Can decorate the meal to make it more attractive to the baby.

When to start complementary feeding

Immediately on completion of 6 months

How do I start complementary feeding?



Day 01 of complementary feeding

- Prepare complementary food in a **semi solid soft form**.
- Mash rice very well.
- Mix it with some expressed breast milk to make the taste familiar to the baby.
- Give 2–3 teaspoons of this preparation.



Days 2–3 of complementary feeding

- Give one or two meals a day of very well mashed rice.
- Gradually increase the amount at each meal.
- Continue breastfeeding on demand.



Days 4–6 of complementary feeding

- Start adding other food (eg: pulses such as dhal).
- One new food at a time to the rice for 2-3 days continuously before adding another new food.
- 3–4 teaspoons at a time, twice a day.
- A tea spoon of well mashed fruit after rice meal (eg: papaya, banana).
- **Continue to breastfeed.**



Days 7 – 9 of complementary feeding

- Adding an animal origin food item such as powdered dried sprats / fish /chicken early to the rice, dhal mix is very important.

Do you know why it is important to give animal origin foods at this age?



Wash sprats without removing the head and then air or oven dry or roast and then grind them whole to a fine texture. Store it in a bottle and add about a tea spoon, when preparing a meal.

Animal origin foods are rich in iron and help brain development, which is fastest in the first 2 years of life.

- Temper with 1–2 teaspoons of oil or butter or cook the food with thick coconut milk to increase energy content.
- Continue mashed fruit and breast feeding.

Days 10 – 15 of complementary feeding

■ With half mashed rice



A pulse (e.g. dhal or green gram or gram etc.)

+



Animal origin food such as fish/ chicken/meat/ liver/sprats

+



Pumpkin/ carrot / yellow sweet potatoes



Temper with 1–2 teaspoons of oil / butter or cook with thick coconut milk

■ 5–6 teaspoons at a time, twice a day.



- Also give well mashed banana / papaw 1–2 teaspoons in between or after main meals.
- **Continue breastfeeding.**

Day 16 – 30 of complementary feeding

■ With mashed rice



Dhal/ chick peas/
green gram/
cowpea



Sprats/ fish /
chicken / liver



Egg yolk / pumpkin
/ carrot



Gotukola /
drumstick leaves
(murunga kola)/
sarana / thampala /
mukunuwenna

- Temper with a tea spoon of oil / butter / cook with thick coconut milk. Else, butter or margarine can be added to the cooked food.
- Amount of food given at a time - about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a tea cup, 2-3 times a day.
- Well mashed fruit such as banana/ papaw / mango / avocado, 1-2 teaspoons in between or after main meals.
- Continuous, gradual introduction of new foods, one at a time, is very important for better physical growth and brain development. Try giving different food items at different meals (e.g. if 'gotukola' is given for lunch, give 'sarana' for dinner).
- **Continue to breastfeed.** Breastfeeding can follow a meal. After this, sips of boiled, cooled water can be offered to the baby.

By completion of one month of complementary feeding (by completion of 7 months of age)

■ With coarsely mashed rice



Pulses (gram / green gram /soya / dhal / cowpea etc.)



Iron rich foods of animal origin (sprats / fish / chicken / liver etc.)



Vegetables, green leaves



Temper with 1-2 teaspoons of oil / butter / cook with thick coconut milk. Else butter / margarine can be added to cooked food

- ½ tea cup at a time, 2-3 times a day.
- Give well mashed fruit, 2-3 teaspoons at a time 1-2 times a day (after a main meal or in between main meals as a snack).
- **Continue breast feeding.** Breast feed after a main meal or a snack. After this, offer sips of boiled, cooled water.

If a breastfed baby is started on complementary food on medical advice before completing 6 months, the meal pattern given in this booklet till the completion of the seventh month will have to be started before the age indicated here and continued during the seventh month. Thereafter, from completion of the seventh month the baby's meal pattern should be the same as the age appropriate pattern as stated in the booklet.

By 7 months and one week of age

■ Main meal - Coarsely mashed rice with,



Pulses (dhal, germinated green gram, soya, gram etc.)



Iron rich animal origin food (sprats, fish, chicken, liver)



Eggs, vegetables, green leaves



1-2 teaspoons of oil / butter / or cook with thick coconut milk

- Half of a tea cup of food at a time, 2-3 times a day.
- Give about 4 teaspoons of well mashed fruit, after main meals or in between meals as a snack.
- 1-2 Snacks a day between main meals.

Do you know why it is important to give various types of food and different tastes during this period?

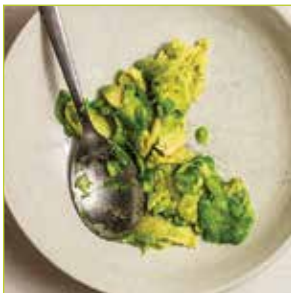
- By taking various types of food, the ability to get required nutrients is more.
- This is a special period in which the child learns about various foods and different tastes.
- As the child grows, the habit of eating any type of food develops.

By seven months and two weeks of age

- **Main meals** - A variety of coarsely chopped food. Give a variety of vegetables.



- Half a tea cup of food at a time, 2-3 times a day.



- Give 4 -5 teaspoons scraped fruit after main meals.
- **Continue to breastfeed.**
- **Snacks** - 1-2 a day between main meals.
- Breastfeeding can follow a meal. After this, offer the baby some boiled, cooled water.

During meals

- Point out the different foods and name them.
- Show the different colours.
- Talk about different tastes.
- This will help learning and brain development and the baby will love meal times.

By completion of 8 months of age

- **Main meals** - A variety of food should be given e.g. Jak, bread fruit. The texture of the main meal should be coarsely chopped.



- Give a bit more than $\frac{1}{2}$ tea cup of food at a time, 2-3 times a day. Also give scraped fruit about $\frac{1}{4}$ tea cup in between or after the main meals.
- **Snacks** – 1-2 a day. Variety is important.
- Now that baby is learning to self-feed, finger foods such as a small piece of hopper (soft center portion), a piece of ripe avocado or a piece of bread spread with butter can be given as a snack. **It is important that baby is not left alone with finger foods. They must be given with the caregiver helping and encouraging baby to self-feed.**



- **Continue to breastfeed.**

By completion of 9 months of age

- **Main meals - A variety of coarsely chopped food should be given.**



- Give a bit more than $\frac{1}{2}$ tea cup of food at a time for the main meals, 3 - 4 times a day. Also give scraped fruit about $\frac{1}{4}$ tea cup after the main meals.
- 1 - 2 nutritious snacks a day.



- **Breastfeed after meals.**
- **Try to let baby sit with family members at meal times and have meals.**

9 – 11 months of age



Variety in meals is very important. Otherwise baby does not learn to eat different types of food and may not get all nutrients needed for healthy growth and brain development. Rice and 'curries' can be served separately and can be mixed while feeding.

Let baby touch and pick foods and encourage self-feeding while you help him/her to eat.



$\frac{3}{4}$ tea cups of food at a time, 3 – 4 times a day for the main meals. 

- Give finger foods.
- Give fruits after main meals.
- 1-2 nutritious snacks a day.
- **Breastfeed after meals.**

1-2 years of age

- Baby should be eating nutritious family foods now.
- Main meals - A variety of nutritious family food 3 times a day, a bit more than a tea cup at each meal.
- Try to feed 5 different items of vegetables and fruits per day.
- Try to let baby sit with family members at meal times and have meals.
- Offer a nutritious snack in between two main meals; 1-2 snacks a day.



Daily requirement of food at the age of 1-2 years of age

Food group	Required amount for the whole day	
Rice, milk rice, string hoppers, hoppers, thosai etc.	2 cups	
Cooked dhal, green gram, cowpea	3 - 6 tablespoons	
Different types of vegetables	3 - 6 tablespoons	
Green Leaves	Half of a tea cup	
Sprats or	6 - 8 numbers	
Fish/chicken/meat/liver or	A match-box-size two pieces	
Kunisso	2 tablespoons	
Egg	01	
Fruits	Twice a day. E.g. one medium size banana, one orange	
Breast milk	2 - 3 times after a meal	
Milk products - If not receiving any breast milk		
Curd or	1 cup	
Yoghurt or	1 cup	
Cheese	A piece the size of a box of matches	

Plan your child's meal.....

Meal	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast 	Milk rice Fish	Chickpeas Coconut	.....	Hoppers Dhal	.....	Sweet potatoes Coconut sambol	.....
Snacks	.....	.....	Yellow sweet potatoes with coconut	Thick Sago porridge	.....	.....	Banana
Lunch 	Rice Dhal Gotu kola Carrot	.....	Rice Chicken Sarana Drumsticks	.....	Rice Liver Spinach Brinjal	.....	Rice Fish Ridge-gourd Drumstick leaves
Snacks 	Potatoes with coconut or butter	Avocado	.....	Egg	Mango	Vadai	Gauva
Dinner 	Coconut roti Egg Vegetable salad	String hoppers Kiri-hodhi Fish	.....	Thosai Coconut Sambol Fish	.....	Noodles Dhal Chicken	.....

What are Snacks?

Snacks are nutritious foods, taken in small amounts, which are rich in energy and nutrients.



Why are snacks needed?

These give extra energy and nutrients in a small amount of food in between two main meals.



In between the main meals give a small nutritious snack.

E.g. a piece of boiled egg / small piece of boiled potato with a bit of butter added.

1-2 snacks a day depending on baby's weight gain and hunger cues.



Egg is a nutritious food for children.

After 2 weeks of starting complementary food, feed a little bit of boiled egg yolk first. The boiled egg white can be started about one week later. Eggs are less expensive source of nutritious food and could even be given daily. Eggs can also be given as snacks.

What are the other important messages related to nutrition and growth of the baby?

1. Feeding during illness

Correct practices of feeding during illness and afterwards will help early recovery and maintain growth and development.

Feed an ill child very patiently. Feed small amounts frequently.

Offer nutritious foods that the child likes. Offer a variety of nutrient-rich foods (E.g. - eggs, fish, chicken).

Add oil, thick coconut milk as usual. Continue to breast feed. Manage/control symptoms such as fever, before offering food, as a feverish child will refuse food.

During recovery - Give an extra meal and extra breastfeeds + extra amount per meal for about 2 weeks after recovery from illness. Use extra rich foods (nutritionally). Continue to feed with extra patience and love.



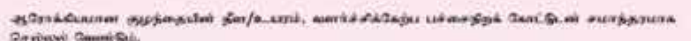
2. Assessing Growth

It is important to check baby's growth regularly and have it marked in the CHDR. Weight every month and length at least at 4, 9, 12, 18 months.

Weighing the child every month until the 2nd birthday is very important.

துறாக்கிலியமான குழந்தையின் தீண்டு, ஊர்ச்சிக்கெழுப் பச்சைத்தூக் கொட்டுவான் சமர்த்தராயாக சொல்லல் வேண்டும்.

(WHO Child Growth Standards)



The food recommendations in this booklet could be changed according to the growth status of the child. According to the growth charts, if the child is overweight, underweight or has growth faltering, special nutritional advice needs to be taken from the healthcare staff.

Formula milk should not be encouraged and introduction to be decided only by a doctor. Formula milk in the 1st year could have adverse long term health effects.

Read the yellow pages in the CHDR and ask your Public Health Midwife or doctor to explain anything you do not understand or want to know more about.



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