

Your guide to



# Early Childhood Nutrition



- 6 - 12 -

months





Now that I'm 6 months old, I'm ready to start eating solid foods. While milk should still be my staple, I'll need other foods to:

- Help develop my motor skills (chewing, biting, sucking and swallowing).
- Provide various nutrients for my growth and development.
- Experience different textures and tastes — I'm less likely to become a picky eater if I'm exposed to a variety of foods at an early age.

## How do you know if I'm ready to wean?

I'll display these signs when I'm ready to wean:

- Sit up against the back of the chair, holding my head up with some support.
- Reach out with my hands to grasp objects.
- Show interest in food.
- Open my mouth for a spoon, then close my lips over it when placed in my mouth.
- Want to chew and put objects in my mouth.
- Seem hungry even after a milk feed.

I may need more time to get used to solid foods. If I keep pushing the spoon out with my tongue or I appear to have difficulty swallowing solids, wait for another week and try again. It's normal for food to spill out from the sides of my mouth at the beginning. This will improve as I develop better control of my oral muscles.

## How do you introduce solids to me?

You can gradually start by introducing 1 new food every 3–4 days and keep a lookout for any allergic reactions. If I develop any allergies during weaning, take note of the food that caused the reaction and send me to a paediatrician immediately.



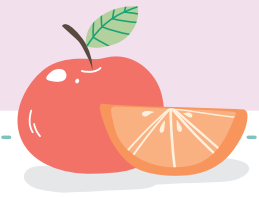
# My first foods

## List of suitable

At this stage, my iron stores are almost depleted and it is important that my first weaning foods are rich in iron. So, a good option is to begin weaning me with iron-fortified rice cereals.

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

## foods by age



### 5 months

Ikan Bilis



Fish



Apple



Cabbage



Banana



Carrot



Peas



Soybean



Potato



Broccoli



Eggs



Chicken



### 7 months

Pumpkin



Spinach



Bread



Rice



Tomato



Sweet Potato



Tofu



Eggplant



Pasta



### 9 months

As I grow older, my ability to chew and bite will develop! This is a great chance to 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 my diet.

Since I'm starting to eat solids, I may need extra fluids. You can give me water during my meals or breast/formula milk after my meals.



# Texture and form

At around 6 months, my food should be smooth, soft and fine (just like below). As I grow older and my chewing abilities develop, my food's texture can be thicker and coarser. When I get to 10–12 months, the food you give me can be mashed, chopped or cut into small pieces.

## What should the texture of my food be?

About 6 months

12-24 months



# How much food should you feed me?

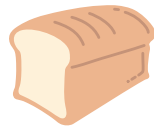


In the early stages, start by giving me 1–2 teaspoons of solids. Slowly increase the amount to 1–2 tablespoons, 2–3 times a day. As I get used to weaning, you can gradually increase the portion size, eventually making it a full meal that can replace one of my milk feeds. Once I am around 10–12 months, I can be given 3 meals of solids a day.

## The recommended daily servings and food portions

<p><b>BROWN RICE AND WHOLEMEAL BREAD</b></p>	2 servings =		
<p><b>FRUIT</b> (Do note that fruit can't be used to replace vegetables or vice versa as they contain different types of nutrients.)</p>	½ serving =		
<p><b>VEGETABLES</b></p>	½ serving =		
<p><b>MEAT AND OTHERS</b></p>	½ serving =		
<p><b>MILK</b></p>	500 – 750ml/ 2 – 3 cups		

4 slices of bread



OR

1 small bowl\* of rice/noodles/bee hoon



OR

2 large potatoes



½ banana/apple/orange/mango



OR

½ wedge of pineapple/papaya/watermelon



½ small bowl\* of vegetables

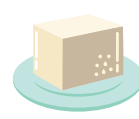


½ palm-size of meat



OR

1 block of bean curd



OR

½ small bowl\* of legumes



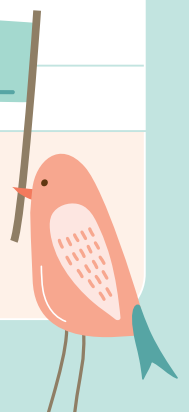
500 – 750ml/  
2 – 3 cups



\*Bowl size refers to a small rice bowl.

Recommended daily servings include all meals and snacks consumed in a day.

**Please pay attention to my bowel movements, height and weight to ensure that I'm eating well.**



# Careful, I can't eat these foods yet!

To help me appreciate and accept the natural flavours of food, don't add sugar, salt or seasoning when preparing my meals. I only need less than 1 gram of salt per day until I'm 12 months old. Any more than this and my kidneys may not be able to cope!



Full cream milk shouldn't be given if I'm below 12 months of age because its nutritional content is unsuitable for me. It is low in iron and high in solutes that could damage my kidneys. Honey (on its own or in products such as cakes) should also not be given as I won't be able to digest the bacteria found in it, which could lead to infant botulism.

## Foods and drinks to avoid



- **Fish with high levels of mercury** — such as shark, swordfish, marlin, tuna (includes bluefin, big eyes, albacore yellowfin varieties), king mackerel, orange roughy, yellowback seabream and dash-and-dot goatfish.
- Any **uncooked food** and **unpasteurised milk products**.
- **Food that is easy to choke on** 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)
- **Commercial snacks** that are **high in sugar and high in sodium** are a big no-no!
- Salt, soy sauce, chicken seasoning powder. Limit foods that are **high in salt content** as this may increase my future risk of high blood pressure. Use ginger or spring onion as alternatives for seasoning.
- **Sugared drinks**, soft drinks and fruit juice.
- **Caffeinated drinks** such as energy drinks, coffee and tea.

# Food allergy symptoms

Generally, symptoms may occur within several hours or days after eating the food. It's best to observe my 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

Some babies have an allergic reaction 1 or 2 days later (e.g. eczema, wheezing, persistent vomiting, constipation, stomach pain).

So do keep a lookout and send me to a paediatrician immediately if I display 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°C or above) over a long period.

To reduce the risk of bacterial growth, food stored in a thermal flask should be eaten within 2 hours after it's cooked.



# On the menu today

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

Let's get started with some sample daily menus to give you an idea of the types of food you can prepare! These plans serve as a guide only, so do feed me according to my appetite as I can decide whether I want to eat and how much to eat.



## Early morning

150ml breast/formula milk



## Breakfast

3–4 tablespoons\* of brown rice cereal mixed with 60ml breast/formula milk and ¼ medium banana (pureed)



Mid morning 180ml breast/formula milk

## Afternoon

180ml breast/formula milk



## Lunch

½ bowl\*\* of porridge with minced chicken (23g) and mashed pumpkin (25g)



## Nap time



## Dinner

- ½ bowl\*\* of porridge mixed with a small block of mashed tofu (43g) and mashed broccoli (25g)
- ¼ small pear that's been scraped



## 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 me!

As I begin my journey to discover solid foods, here are some nutritious and yummy recipes you can prepare for me!

## Pumpkin & salmon rice porridge

Makes 2 baby portions

6–9 months



### Ingredients

- 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

Makes 2 baby portions

6–9 months

## Ingredients

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

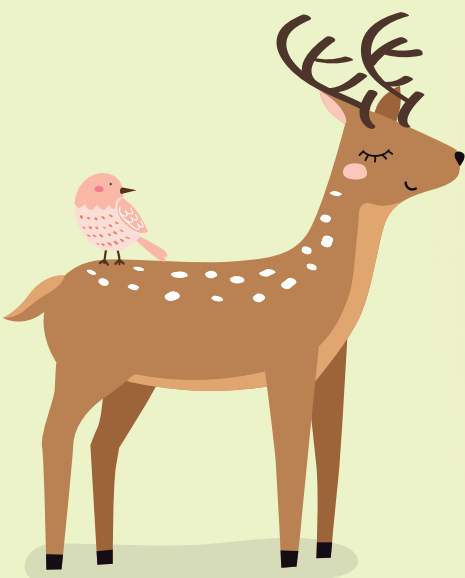
## Method

- 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.



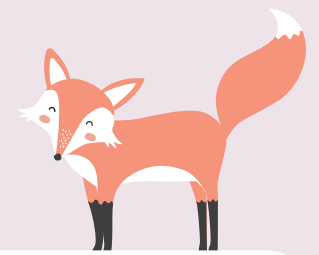
## Healthy eating tip:

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



# On the menu today

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



Rise & shine



Early morning

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 of papaya

Bath time



Mid morning 180ml breast/formula milk

Afternoon

180ml breast/formula milk



Play time



Lunch

½ bowl\*\* of porridge with a small block of tofu (43g) and finely chopped chye sim (25g)



Nap time



Nap time



Dinner

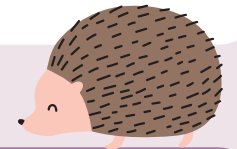
- ½ baked/mashed large potato mixed with cooked minced/chopped chicken (23g), finely grated carrot (15g) and finely chopped tomato (15g)
- ¼ wedge of watermelon



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



# Chicken & mushroom mash

Makes about 4 baby portions

10 – 12 months

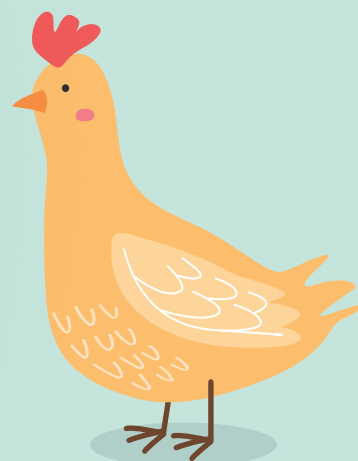
## Ingredients

- 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

*\*Choose cooking oils with the Healthier Choice Symbol.*

## 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 a 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

Makes about 4 baby portions

10 – 12 months

## Ingredients

- 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 a boil, stirring occasionally.
- Simmer for about 20 minutes with a lid on until the lentils are soft.
- Mash until you get the texture you want and cool before serving.
- You may serve the soup with pita bread.

*\*Choose cooking oils with the Healthier Choice Symbol.*



## Healthy eating tip:

Including mashed vegetables in soups is a good way to increase my vegetable intake. If you want, replacing carrots with pumpkin or sweet potato works too!

# Sweet potato fries

Makes 2–4 servings

10–12 months

## Ingredients

- 1 large sweet potato with orange flesh
- ½ tbsp cooking oil\*

## Method:

- Preheat oven to 200°C for 10 minutes and line a rimmed baking tray with foil. Coat with a drizzle of cooking oil.
- Wash and dry the sweet potato.
- Cut in half, then cut lengthwise into strips. Cut each strip in half again until each is about ½-inch thick. If the sweet potato is very long, slice in half horizontally. Strips should be about the size of your finger.
- Place into a large bowl and toss with healthy oil until evenly coated.
- Spread onto prepared baking tray and roast for 22–25 minutes or until soft.
- Let cool slightly and serve as finger food.

*\*Choose cooking oils with the Healthier Choice Symbol.*



## Cooking tip:

- Spread the wedges out on the baking tray so they don't overlap. This will ensure even cooking.
- Poke the fries with a fork or small knife to see if it's very soft.

## Other ways to serve:

- For a thick mash, remove skin and mash with a fork one at a time. For larger portions, you can use a food processor or blender.
- For a thinner sweet potato puree, mash with a fork and add 1 tablespoon warm water at a time to reach your desired consistency.

*This recipe can be made in bulk, which saves time! Store it in the fridge for up to 3 days and remember to reheat before eating.*

# Chickpea & cheese dip

Makes 4 servings

10 – 12 months

## Ingredients

- 1 cup chickpeas, boiled and mashed
- 3 tbsp low-fat cream cheese
- 1 tsp lemon zest, grated
- Optional: wholemeal crackers

## Method

- Boil chickpeas and mash them.
- Add water if needed, to achieve desired consistency.
- Mix all ingredients together until well blended and combined.
- For extra crunch, serve it with wholemeal crackers!



*This recipe can be made in bulk, which saves time! Store it in the fridge for up to 3 days and remember to reheat before eating.*

# In summary

Now that I have begun weaning, here are some key takeaways to help you along as I discover the world of solid foods.

#1



Introduce solids to me gradually by serving one new food every 3–4 days.

#2



As my iron stores begin to deplete, it's important that my first weaning foods are rich in iron.

#3



Keep a lookout for allergic reactions whenever I'm introduced to a new food.

#4



Texture and form are important. My initial foods should be smooth, soft and fine.

#5



Feed me the recommended number of servings of food so I can get all the nutrients I need.

#6



When preparing my food, do not add sugar, salt, or seasoning!





# I just turned



# what's next?

Now that I'm 12 months old, my digestive system is ready to accept small portions of yummy food. Although I'm able to eat the same foods as adults, breast or formula milk is still an important part of my diet.

To ensure that I get all the nutrients I need, it's important that my meals are balanced. So, always include all 4 food groups (fruit, vegetables, grains, meat and alternatives) in my meals and prepare them with minimal salt, sugar or seasoning!

If I'm not eating much, don't worry! It's normal for my growth and appetite to slow down at this age, so let me choose how much to eat.

For a full guide on my nutritional needs, refer to the next booklet in our series: **Your Guide to Early Childhood Nutrition: 12–24 Months Old**



Need  
more  
help?



For more resources on weaning and early childhood nutrition, visit [healthhub.sg/earlynutrition](https://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](mailto:contact@breastfeeding.org.sg)
- 🌐 Website [breastfeeding.org.sg](https://breastfeeding.org.sg)

### Joyful Parenting and Breastfeeding

- 📞 Hotline 6488 0286
- ✉ Email [joyfulparenting@gmail.com](mailto:joyfulparenting@gmail.com)

### Parentline

For parents with parenting and child care issues.

- 📞 Hotline 6289 8811

### Childcare Services

- 📞 Hotline 6258 5812
- 🌐 Website [ecda.gov.sg](https://ecda.gov.sg)





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

