

# Making Baby Food at Home

So you've decided to make your own baby food. It takes a little planning and time, but home-prepared baby food is lower in salt and sugar, can add more variety, tastes and looks better, and can save you money.

## Equipment

Various equipment can be used. The simplest and least expensive are fine-meshed strainers or sieves. Food mills or baby food grinders are inexpensive and convenient. Electric blenders or food processors, if available, are also quick and convenient.



## Cleanliness

Preparing food for baby requires even greater care than for regular family meals. Always wash your hands before preparing food or feeding your baby. Wash all utensils and equipment, including spoons, storage containers and the bowl, blades and base of blender or processor, with hot soapy water and let air dry.

## Vegetables and Fruits

- Choose fresh or frozen vegetables and fresh, frozen or unsweetened canned fruit (ie. canned in its own juice). Canned vegetables are not recommended because of their higher salt content and frozen or canned fruit in syrup is not recommended because of its higher sugar content)
- Potatoes do not freeze well
- For best nutrition, vegetables and fruits should be left whole or cut in large pieces and then steamed or boiled. Do not over cook.
- **To steam:** place in a steamer or wire strainer above a small amount of boiling water. Cover with pot lid, reduce heat to keep water just boiling and steam for as short a time possible to reach the desired tenderness.
- **To boil:** place in a small amount of boiling water, cover with a pot lid, bring back to a boil and reduce heat to keep water just boiling. Boil gently for a short time to reach desired tenderness.

## Meat, Fish, Poultry and Alternates

- Use only the **yolk** of the egg until your baby is about one year old, to lessen the chance of an egg allergy. Mash hard-cooked yolk with a little breastmilk, formula or water.
- Choose lean meat, fish and poultry. Avoid fried, breaded, cured or smoked products and remove the skin from poultry.
- Stew, braise, boil or roast meat or poultry. Make sure it is cooked thoroughly. Poach fish and remove all bones. Flake or grind to a fine texture. Add breastmilk, formula or water if necessary to moisten the puree.

## Guide for Preparing Baby Food

Type of Food	Quantity	Pureeing Time	One Serving	
			6-9 mos.	10-12 mos.
<b>Vegetables</b>	200 ml ( $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) cooked vegetable + 2-3 tablespoons water	1-2 minutes	2-6 tbsp	4-6 tbsp
<b>Fruits</b>	125-200 ml ( $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) cooked fruit + 1-3 teaspoons fruit juice or water	15-45 seconds	2-6 tbsp	4-6 tbsp
<b>Meat, Fish &amp; Poultry</b>	125 ml ( $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) cooked, cubed meat + 4-6 tablespoons water or milk	varies	1-2 tbsp	2-4 tbsp

**Note:** This is only a **GUIDE**. Since baby's individual appetites vary, use the example of one serving as a **GUIDE**. Let your baby show you when he or she has eaten enough.

## General Infant Feeding Guide

AGE (months)	FOOD	TEXTURE
0 to 6	Breast Milk or Infant Formula	Liquid Liquid
6	add Baby Cereal (iron fortified)	Pureed or strained (thick, soup-like)
6 to 8	add Cooked vegetables Cooked or soft fruits	Pureed or mashed Pureed or mashed
8 to 10	add Meat and Alternates (hardcooked egg yolk, well-cooked dry beans like kidney beans)	Mashed or finely ground/minced
	add Plain yogourt, cheese	
	add Dry toast (instead of teething biscuit)	
	add Fruit juices (diluted with equal part water)	
10 to 12	add Regular table food (no seasoning) Cooked and soft finger foods	Chopped, small pieces
	add Milk - whole homo	
12	add Whole egg	Chopped (finely)

### General Tips

- offer individual foods before introducing combinations
- do not add salt, sugar or other sweeteners or fats (eg. butter, margarine, cooking oil, gravy)
- allow cooked foods to cool slightly before pureeing
- cut cooked foods into one inch pieces or smaller before pureeing
- test for smoothness by rubbing a small amount between your finger and thumb
- add breastmilk, infant formula, water, or unsweetened fruit juice to moisten, as necessary

### Storage Tips

- **In the refrigerator:** store baby food in tightly covered plastic containers in the coldest part of the refrigerator for no more than **3 days**. Remove the portion to be served at each meal rather than feeding directly from the container. This could spread germs from your baby's mouth into the food for next time. Any food that has been heated should not be refrigerated for another meal.
- **In the freezer:** once the baby food has been prepared, it can be frozen in ice-cube trays or spooned onto cookie sheets. Cover the ice-cube tray or cookie sheet with plastic wrap and place in the coldest part of the freezer. Once the cubes or spoonfuls are frozen (it may take 3-6 hours to freeze), transfer them into plastic freezer bags. Make sure all of the air is out of the bag to prevent loss of vitamins. Do not refreeze any thawed food.

Freezer Storage Time	
Vegetables	6 to 8 months
Fruits	6 to 8 months
Meat and poultry, cooked	10 weeks
Fish, cooked	10 weeks
Vegetable and meat mixtures	10 weeks
Purees containing milk	4 to 6 weeks



Adapted from: ABC's of Making Baby Food From Scratch, Toronto FoodShare, 1998  
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