Guide to Baby Feeding
from around 6-7 months

Breast milk is the ideal food for your baby. Breast milk or infant formula is all your baby needs for around the first 6 months.

For baby feeding advice, call **PlunketLine on 0800 933 922.**

For questions about Wattie's baby food, call **Wattie's for Baby on 0800 55 66 66.**



Stage 1 around 6 months
but not before 4 months

Offer milk BEFORE solids. Breast milk or formula is the most important food.

Signs baby is ready for solid foods. Your baby:
- is holding their head up and sits with less help.
- is interested in watching you eat.
- still seems hungry after a milk feed.
- opens their mouth when food on a spoon approaches.
- their tongue doesn't push food out of their mouth.
- shows signs of biting and chewing.

Introduce puréed iron-rich foods, vegetables and fruits from around 6 months when baby is showing developmental signs of readiness for solid foods.

Feeding tips:
Start by offering a small amount of food after a milk feed, just ½-2 tsps.

Begin with one small meal a day and slowly increase the amount of food you offer.

Offer a variety of suitable stage 1 spoon-fed, smooth puréed foods. See the carrot guide for examples.

There is no need to introduce new foods one at a time unless the food is a common allergy-causing food.

Texture of first foods:
Smooth, runny or puréed.



Iron fortified baby rice cereal is a great first food. Mix with breast milk or formula until smooth.

Examples of Stage 1 Foods
- Iron fortified baby rice cereal
- Cooked puréed veggies e.g carrot, pumpkin, kūmara, potato, cassava, kamokamo, taro, spinach, bok choy
- Cooked puréed fruit e.g. apple, pear, apricot, peach
- Puréed or smoothly mashed ripe banana, avocado.
- Cooked puréed meat, chicken, fish
- Cooked puréed legumes, lentils and rice
- Wattie's blue label cans & pouches

Stage 2 around 7 months

Offer milk BEFORE solids. Breast milk or formula is still the most important food.

At this stage your baby may be:
- starting to sit unsupported.
- learning to bite & chew and may have teeth.
- leaning towards food or spoon.
- interested in finger foods.
- taking sips of water from a cup.

Feeding tips:
Try mixed ingredient foods with a range of tastes.

Introduce new foods suitable for stage 2 (see carrot guide).

Baby may eat between 2 Tbsps and 1/2 cup food at each meal. Be responsive to baby's hunger and fullness cues, and let them guide you about how much they eat.

Offer baby 2 or 3 meals a day.

Texture of stage 2 foods:
Thicker purées, small soft lumps and mashed foods.



Increase the variety of foods, in a soft mashed texture. Depending on your baby, consider offering some soft finger foods.

Examples of Stage 2 Foods
ADD TO STAGE 1 FOODS
- Cooked mashed veggies e.g. broccoli, parsnip, cauliflower, pūhā
- Well-cooked egg
- Cooked pasta & cut-up plain noodles
- Cheese, yoghurt, cottage cheese
- Iron fortified baby cereals
- Soft tofu
- Wattie's red label cans & pouches

Ensure infants and young children are sitting down and actively supervised when eating and drinking.

Common questions about feeding your pēpi

Q Which first kai are a good source of iron?

A Iron-rich foods include baby cereal, cooked puréed meat, fish and chicken. Some iron is also found in cooked puréed beans, lentils and green leafy veg.

Q Why are there ingredients in stage 1 & 2 baby foods, which I thought were only suitable for older babies?

A Some ingredients in supermarket baby foods (e.g. sweetcorn, spinach or berries) may be given to babies earlier than if made at home, as the commercial cooking and pureeing process ensures these foods are an appropriate texture for babies.

Q How do I introduce common allergy causing foods?

A It's important to introduce common allergy-causing foods before 12 months. Make sure foods are an age-appropriate texture and introduce them one at a time to monitor for any reaction. If no allergic reaction occurs, continue to offer at least once a week. If you have a family history of food allergies or any concerns, discuss with your health professional first.

Did you know?

You don't need to add sugar, salt, soy sauce, butter, cream or margarine to baby food. It may taste bland to adults, but it's appealing to babies. Fast food is often high in salt and fat. While it is a treat for adults, it shouldn't be given to babies and young children.

Handy Tip How to prepare first foods for baby: 1) Wash & remove skins, seeds, pips, stones and stringy parts from veggies and fruit. 2) Cook until tender in a small amount of water. 3) Purée.

Wattie's baby food recipes are prepared in our specialist baby food facility with carefully selected, quality ingredients.
Wattie's baby food has no preservatives, artificial colours or flavours.

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Guide to Baby Feeding
from around 8-12 months

For baby feeding advice, call **PlunketLine on 0800 933 922.**

For questions about Wattie's baby food, call **Wattie's for Baby on 0800 55 66 66.**



Breast milk or formula feeds are still important, but from 8-9 months offer AFTER solids.

Stage 3
around 8 months

At this stage your baby may be:
- chewing & biting well.
- eating more independently, but still needing help.
- showing interest in many foods & textures.
- taking swallows of water from a cup. Offer water after solids.

Feeding tips:
Offer more variety of foods in different sizes and textures.

Serve some food as finger food.

Introduce new foods suitable for stage 3 (see carrot guide).

Depending on appetite, offer baby 2-3 meals a day, with 1 or 2 small snacks in-between.

Texture of stage 3 foods:
Offer minced, mashed, chopped, grated and small soft finger food.



Increase texture of food to more chunky, but still soft.



Examples of Stage 3 Foods

ADD TO STAGE 1 & 2 FOODS
- Chopped ripe soft fruit: oranges, mandarins, kiwifruit, strawberries
- Cooked finely chopped watercress, silverbeet, choy sum, capsicum, mushroom, eggplant
- Finely chopped salad vegetables and tomatoes, finely grated carrot
- Cooked finely chopped kai moana/seafood
- Smooth nut butters
- Iron fortified infant muesli, porridge, wheat biscuits
- Bread, toast fingers (white or wholemeal), puffed crispbread
- Cooked onion, garlic, ginger
- Small amounts of mild herbs and spices
- Wattie's green label pouches

Examples of Stage 4 Foods

ADD TO STAGE 1, 2 & 3 FOODS
- Whānau (family) foods
- Whole-fat cow's milk as a drink

Recommended drinks for toddlers from 12 months are breast milk, whole-fat cow's milk and water.

Stage 4
12 months onwards

At this stage your toddler may be:
- feeding themselves with their fingers.
- wanting to use a spoon to feed themselves.
- holding a cup with 2 hands to drink water.
- chewing food well.
- biting through a variety of textures.

Feeding tips:
Your toddler is ready for a wider variety of family foods and finger foods.

Some foods will still need to have the texture altered by cooking until soft and cutting up into a suitable size. Avoid small hard, round, sticky, or stringy foods.

Your toddler can join in with whānau mealtimes, and needs 3 meals a day with small snacks in-between.

Offer milk or water after food or in-between meals. From 12 months of age whole-fat cow's milk can be offered as a drink. Around 350mL of cow's milk a day is enough for toddlers.

Texture of toddler foods:
Increased variety of food textures.



Finger foods, cut up pieces of food, soft chunky food, minced, grated foods.

To avoid any type of food being a choking hazard always ensure you offer foods that are an age-appropriate texture. Ensure infants and young children are sitting down and actively supervised when eating and drinking.

It's important not to add sugar, salt, soy sauce, butter, cream or margarine to baby and toddler food. As fast food is often high in fat, salt and/or sugar, it shouldn't be given to babies and young children.

Common questions about feeding your pēpi (under 12 months)

Q How do I know my baby has eaten enough kai?

A Healthy babies are good at regulating their food intake so they get just what they need. When your baby has eaten enough they may refuse food, turn their head away from the spoon, cry, or clamp their mouth shut. Never force your baby to eat more than they want. Every baby's appetite is different, and it is important to be responsive to their fullness cues.

Q Can my baby have lumpy foods if he doesn't have teeth yet?

A Babies don't need teeth to eat soft lumpy food. Their gums are hard and they can 'munch' soft lumps. As baby gets older it's important to offer more lumpy & textured food to assist normal chewing, swallowing and speech development.

Q What should my baby drink?

A Other than breast milk or infant formula, the best drink for babies is water. Don't offer fruit juice, cordial, soft drinks or flavoured milk as these can be high in sugars. Never give coffee, tea or alcohol as they can harm your baby's health. Never leave baby to suck on a bottle for a long time as the natural sugars in milk can cause tooth decay.

Wattie's and Plunket have been proudly working together to support New Zealand babies for more than 30 years.

whānau āwhina plunket

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