



*get up and grow*

# First foods



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

# Breastmilk or formula

is the only food  
baby needs

from birth  
until around  
6 months

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#### Health disclaimer

The information in this publication is for general information only, and must not be used as a substitute for medical advice. You must seek independent professional medical advice before relying on any information contained in this publication.

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# Good foods for baby from around 6 months

- Iron fortified infant cereal mixed with breastmilk, formula or cooled boiled water.
- Pureed well cooked meat, chicken or fish (no bones).
- Pureed cooked legumes like 'no added salt' baked beans.

Then baby can try:

- smooth cooked vegies - potato, pumpkin, carrot or broccoli
- smooth cooked fruit - apple or pear
- finely mashed soft fruit - banana, mango or avocado
- full fat yoghurt, smooth cheese and custard.

Food can be pureed using a blender and adding liquid if needed to get the right texture.



*Once baby is eating smooth foods, increase the texture by mashing and chopping*

Baby can try:

- mashed or chopped cooked vegies
- well-cooked and mashed fish (no bones), soft meat or minced meat
- mashed or chopped cooked fruit - apple or pear
- cereals such as porridge or wheat biscuits with breastmilk or formula.

**Note: To prevent botulism, do not feed honey to infants aged under 12 months**



## By 8 months, most babies can manage finger foods

Finger foods are foods cut into small pieces that baby can pick up and feed themselves, like:

- chopped raw soft fruit - melon, banana or avocado
- cooked grains - rice and pasta
- bread or toast cut into strips
- cheese cut into sticks.

At 12 months, baby can eat the same healthy foods that the family eats.

There is no need to add salt, sugar, margarine or butter to foods for babies and young kids.

# Introducing solid foods

- Baby needs breastmilk for as long as possible.
- It is important to keep breastfeeding or formula feeding even when baby starts to eat food.
- Start with one or two teaspoons of food after a milk feed.
- Start with smooth soft foods.
- As baby learns to chew move on to mashed lumpy or minced foods.
- Grate, cook or mash apples, carrots and other hard fruits and vegies.
- Most babies have no problems with new foods, but watch for reactions such as rash, diarrhoea or vomiting.
- Allow baby to decide how much they want to eat and respond to signs of fullness - don't force them to finish all their food.
- Offer a variety of foods - baby needs to learn to like new foods.



**Talk to childcare educators about the kinds of food baby eats at home. They will let you know what new foods your child has tried during the day.**

## Make sure kids don't choke

- Babies and young kids are learning how to eat - keep an eye on them.
- Whole nuts, popcorn and other hard, small, round and sticky solid foods should not be served to young children at all.
- Feed kids when they are awake and alert.
- You can help kids to eat but don't force them.
- You should not leave baby alone with a bottle.
- Stay with young kids when they are eating.

Early childhood services have policies in place to reduce the risk of choking in babies and young kids.





### Breastfeeding

strong mums, strong babies



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### Infant formula



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### Get moving

1-5 years



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### Good drinks

for our kids



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### Healthy foods strong kids

1-5 years



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### Get moving

birth to 2 years



## Information and help

- Talk to your childcare educator.
- Talk to your health worker.
- Call the FREE Breastfeeding Helpline on 1800 mum 2 mum or 1800 686 268.



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# Good drinks

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# Breastmilk is best

# for babies

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## Good drinks for babies

- Breastmilk is best for baby, and is the only food or drink that baby needs until around 6 months.
- Breastfeed your baby for as long as you can.
- If formula feeding your baby, talk to your health worker about how to use infant formula safely.

- Babies who are breastfed can have cooled boiled water from around 6 months.
- Babies who are formula fed can have cooled boiled water at any age.



**Water -  
the best**

**healthy drink  
for our kids**

Sweet drinks like soft drinks,  
juice, cordial and flavoured milk  
have too much sugar and are not needed  
for good health.



Water is important for good health -  
it helps our bodies to work well

- Give kids water with all meals and snacks.
- Pack water bottles when going out.
- Take plenty of water in the car.
- Keep a jug of clean tap water nearby.
- On hot days, keep the jug of water cool.



## Kids need lots of water

- Kids need to eat and drink more often than adults.
- Kids can dehydrate very quickly and get very sick if they do not drink water throughout the day.
- If kids are active, they need to drink more water.
- Drink water yourself - let kids see you like water.

# Sweet drinks are not needed for good health

Sweet drinks are:

- soft drinks
- flavoured waters
- flavoured milk
- cordial
- sports drinks
- fruit drinks
- fruit juice
- tea.

Do not give baby unhealthy drinks like tea, soft drinks or cordial in a bottle. Tea weakens your baby's blood.

Sweet drinks:

- can lead to tooth decay and weight gain
- fill your kids up so they don't eat healthy meals.



## Cow's milk and babies

Babies under 12 months should not drink cow's milk as the main drink because:

- they can't process the protein and salt well
- it can cause their blood to be low in iron.

Small amounts of cow's milk can be mixed with baby's food.

## Cow's milk and kids

- Cow's milk is good for kids over 12 months - limit to 2 cups a day.
- Kids under 2 should not have low or reduced fat milk.
- Kids over 2 should mostly have reduced fat milk.
- Kids don't need flavoured milk.



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**Get moving**  
1-5 years



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**Healthy foods  
strong kids**  
1-5 years



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**Get moving**  
birth to 1 year



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# Information and help

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- Talk to your health worker.
- Call the FREE Breastfeeding Helpline on 1800 mum 2 mum or 1800 686 268.



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# Healthy foods strong kids

1-5 years



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# Healthy FOOD

helps kids  
grow  
STRONG

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## Healthy food:

- helps kids grow healthy and strong
- can help prevent kids from becoming overweight
- can help to fight sickness.

At 12 months, kids can eat the same healthy foods that the family eats.



**Kids should eat  
healthy  
foods  
EVERY DAY**

## 'Everyday foods' include:

- plenty of vegetables, beans and lentils
- fruit
- breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles (mostly wholegrain), and other grains like oats and barley
- milk, yoghurt and cheese (mostly reduced fat for kids over 2 years)
- lean meat such as kangaroo, fish, chicken (without skin), eggs, beans and nuts (but not whole nuts for kids under 3 years).

Most bush tucker is very healthy for kids.



# Sometimes foods

'Sometimes foods' are high in fat, sugar and salt and are not needed. They can lead to tooth decay and weight gain and leave less room for healthy foods.

Limit sometimes foods to kids. Tell kids they can only have sometimes foods on one day of the week, and in small amounts.

'Sometimes foods' are:

- chocolate, lollies, biscuits and chips
- pastries, pies and sausage rolls
- fried foods like chicken and hot chips
- takeaway and junk food
- cakes and ice cream
- juice, soft drinks, cordial and other sweet drinks.

**There is no need to add sugar, salt, honey, butter or margarine to food for babies and kids.**



## Help kids to enjoy eating healthy foods

- Talk to kids about the difference between everyday and sometimes foods.
- Never use food to reward or punish a child - this can lead to unhealthy food habits.

# Water is the best healthy drink for our kids



- Kids don't need sweet drinks.
- Make sure kids have plenty of clean water.
- Give kids water with meals and snacks.

# Regular mealtimes give kids energy

- Kids have small stomachs - they need small meals and healthy snacks.
- Kids need 3 meals and 2 healthy snacks a day.
- Kids who eat all the time never learn how it feels to be hungry.





## Make meal times fun

- Give kids new foods to try.
- Sit down and eat healthy food with your kids.
- Eating together helps kids learn to share.



## *All kids need breakfast*

- Breakfast gives kids energy for the day ahead.
- Missing breakfast can start unhealthy eating habits.
- Kids who don't eat breakfast are more likely to be overweight.



## Good breakfast food

- Healthy wholegrain cereals such as wheat biscuits and porridge.
- Yoghurt and fruit.
- Baked beans on wholegrain toast.
- Toast with cheese.
- Boiled or scrambled eggs.
- Pikelets with yoghurt and fruit.

## Ideas for healthy snacks

- Wholegrain bread and cereals.
- Chopped up fruit and vegies.
- Yoghurt.
- Raisin toast.
- Cheese cut into sticks.





## Lunchbox ideas

- Fresh fruit.
- Boiled eggs.
- Wholemeal sandwiches, pita wrap or bread roll with:
  - mashed egg and lettuce
  - chicken with cheese and grated carrot
  - cheese
  - lean cold meat, lettuce and tomato
  - mashed banana
  - tuna, corn and lettuce.

## Ideas for lunch

- Soup and a bread roll.
- Pasta with sauce and cheese.
- Leftovers from the night before.
- Toasted sandwich.
- Fruit and cheese or yoghurt.





## Quick and healthy dinner ideas

- Soup - chicken, pea and ham, pumpkin and lentil.
- Eggs - scrambled, boiled or omelettes.
- Baked potatoes with tuna, baked beans or cheese toppings.
- Pasta with vegetables or tuna.
- Sweet potato and chick pea patties, tuna and corn patties.
- Stir fry beef and vegetables.
- Curries or stew with rice.
- Salads.
- 'No added salt' baked beans.
- Cheese on toast.

## Celebration food

- Try to have healthy food for all celebrations.
- If you have 'sometimes foods' like cakes and ice cream, try to limit the serve size.
- Try offering a plate of fruit to have with sometimes foods.

## Fussy eaters

- Kids can be fussy eaters when they are sick or tired.
- Kids may refuse to eat if they have too much food on their plate or if they have filled up on drinks or snacks before meals.
- Limit drinks or snacks between meals.
- Set a limit of 30 minutes for a meal.
- Take away the uneaten food and never force a child to eat.
- Re-offer foods that have been refused - it may take up to 10 times before it is accepted.
- Allow the child to decide how much they want to eat.

# Food allergies

- Food allergies can make kids very sick.
- The most common foods that kids under 5 are allergic to are: cow's milk, soy, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, sesame, fish and shellfish.

## Food allergies can cause:

- hives and rashes
- swelling of the lips, tongue or mouth
- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- trouble breathing, which can cause loss of consciousness, injury or even death.



## Food intolerance

- Food intolerance is not as bad as an allergy and takes more food to make kids sick.
- Kids can get headaches, skin rashes and stomach upsets.

If your kids have allergies or intolerances, tell your childcare educator.

# Keeping food safe

- Babies and kids are at more risk of sickness from spoiled food.
- This is because their immune systems are still developing.
- Food can be spoiled by many things – hair, chemicals, cleaning products, pests and bacteria.

## Food poisoning

- Bacteria are in most foods but are not always bad for you.
- Some bacteria can cause food poisoning and make you very sick.
- Kids may have nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and stomach cramps.
- Food poisoning is very serious in babies and kids because they dehydrate and lose fluids quickly.

## Gastro-enteritis

- Gastro-enteritis is mainly caused by a viral sickness passed between people.
- Washing hands and keeping food safe will help to stop the spread of viral gastro-enteritis.



# High-risk foods

These foods can be spoiled easily:

- milk, meat and fish
- meals made from milk, meat or fish
- cooked rice.

Canned food is safe as long as the can is sealed. Once the can is opened it becomes a high-risk food.





## Serving food safely

- Make sure all kids and adults wash their hands before making or eating food.
- Store all high-risk food in the fridge and make sure it is covered.
- Keep kitchen areas clean.
- Do not re-heat cooked food more than once.
- Throw away any food that has been out of the fridge for more than 2 hours.
- Wash knives and boards used to cut uncooked meat and fish very well before using with other foods.

# Keeping kids safe

## Kids helping in the kitchen

- Make sure kids always wash their hands before touching food.
- Be careful with sharp knives and hot surfaces.
- Always watch kids in the kitchen.





## Keep kids safe from choking

- Babies and young kids are learning how to eat - keep an eye on them.
- Kids should sit down when eating.
- Grate, cook, finely slice or mash apples, carrots and other hard fruits and vegies.
- Young kids (under 3) should not eat whole nuts, popcorn or hard foods.
- Never force a child to eat.
- Never leave a baby alone with a bottle.
- Kids need an adult around when they are eating.



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**Breastfeeding**  
*strong means strong babies*

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*1-5 years*

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## Information and help

- Talk to your childcare educator.
- Talk to your health worker.

# GET UP & GROW

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD



## Lunchbox ideas:

Meals for early  
childhood settings



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You will need to provide lunch and snacks for your child while they are at family day care, child care or preschool if the setting does not offer meals. Children have small stomachs, so their energy and nutritional requirements are best met with small meals and snacks spread throughout the day.

Cow's milk should not be given as a main drink to infants before 12 months of age. It can be used in small amounts in other foods from around six months. Full-cream plain milk is recommended for children aged one to two years, and reduced-fat plain milk is suitable for children over the age of two years.

Depending on how long your child attends the setting, you might need to provide just one snack, or lunch and one or two snacks. Regular meals and snacks help your child to concentrate, play and enjoy their day.

## Lunch ideas

- A sandwich, small pita wrap or small bread roll with fillings such as:
  - mashed egg with lettuce
  - shredded chicken with cheese and lettuce
  - tuna, corn and lettuce
  - turkey breast with cucumber and lettuce
  - chicken, chutney and alfalfa sprouts
  - cold roast meat, chutney, lettuce and tomato
  - vegemite and cheese
  - cream cheese and grated carrot
  - avocado, tomato and lettuce
  - mashed banana
- A few crackers or rice cakes with cheese
- A small, cold slice of frittata
- A homemade savoury muffin – zucchini or corn and cheese
- One or two slices of homemade pita pizza

### What not to include

Try not to include sweet fillings in sandwiches, for example: jam, honey, sprinkles or chocolate spread.

**Keep lunches cool by sending them in an insulated lunchbox, with a frozen drink bottle or ice brick inside.**

# Snack ideas

- Small, fresh pieces of fruit: a mandarin, banana, apricot, pear, plum or a bunch of grapes
- Sliced fruit: apples, oranges, melon or pineapple
- Two or three crackers with cheese or vegemite
- One or two small pikelets – try including grated fruit or vegetables in the mix
- A flavoured scone – pumpkin or cheese
- A few vegetable slices or sticks served with dip (be sure to blanch tough or fibrous vegetables until soft)
- A small tub of yoghurt
- A cheese stick

## What not to include

Packaged snack foods such as muesli bars, fruit straps, chocolate bars, lollies, donuts and potato chips. These are 'discretionary choices', foods that are high in kilojoules, added sugars, salt and/or saturated fat and have little nutritional value.

If you want to put a 'treat' in your child's lunchbox, choose something other than food. A small note or drawing from you or a bright sticker can be a lovely surprise occasionally. It is not necessary to pack 'discretionary choices' in the lunchbox.

# Drinks

The best drink for your child is water. Include a water bottle in your child's lunchbox every day.

## What not to include

Sweet drinks such as soft drink, flavoured mineral water, flavoured milk, cordial and fruit drink are 'discretionary choices'. They do not provide much nutrition and can fill children up, leading to a decreased appetite for healthier foods. Sweet drinks can also lead to tooth decay and weight gain, and are not part of a healthy lunchbox.

Include a variety of foods in your child's lunchbox from day to day. Make sure that the foods packed in the lunchbox are from the basic food groups.

- Vegetables, including different types and colours, and legumes/beans
- Fruit
- Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley
- Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced-fat (reduced-fat milks are not suitable for children under the age of two years).

If you are packing any foods that need refrigeration (such as cheese, yoghurt, milk or cooked eggs or meat), use an insulated lunch bag with a frozen water bottle inside. This will keep the lunch cool and prevent it from spoiling.



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For more meal and snack ideas  
Dietitians Association of Australia  
[www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)

[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

All information in this publication is correct as at April 2013