

Weaning Information for Parents and Carers

When is the right time?

The Department of Health recommends that parents wean their child from 6 months of age, although all children are different they also stress that weaning should definitely not take place before your baby is 17 weeks old.

Remember that when babies first start to wean, they will still need around 20 fl oz of milk a day, and will carry on needing this until their 1st birthday.

Knowing when your baby is ready to be weaned

Some signs that may indicate that your child is ready to be weaned include:

- Holding his or her head up and control head movements.
- Co-ordinating their eyes, hands and mouth so that they can look at the food, pick it up and put it in their mouth, all by themselves.
- Sitting well when supported
- Making chewing motions
- Being unsatisfied after full milk feed

How to wean your baby

- Choose a time of day when both you and baby are relaxed
- Go at your baby's pace. Do not rush them
- Let your baby enjoy touching and holding the food.
- At first introduce smooth texture of food. Other textures can be introduced later. Start by offering just a few pieces or teaspoons of food, once a day.
- Make sure baby is sat upright and facing forward
- Only heat up what you think your baby will eat. You can always heat more if they are still hungry.
- Have meals at the same time everyday so that your baby will know what to expect
- Let them enjoy meals with the family.

Choosing what food is best

From 6 Months:

Your baby's first foods can include mashed or soft cooked fruit and vegetables like parsnip, potato, yam, sweet potato, carrot, apple or pear, all cooled before eating. Or soft fruit like peach, soft ripe banana or avocado as finger foods or mashed. Or baby rice or baby cereal mixed with your baby's usual milk. Keep feeding them breast milk or infant formula as well but don't give them whole cows' milk as a drink until they are a year old.

From 8-9 months

Gradually, your baby will move toward eating three meals a day. It will be a mixture of soft finger foods, mashed and chopped foods. Your baby's diet should consist of a variety of the following types of food: fruit and vegetables; bread, rice, pasta, potatoes and other starchy foods; meat, fish, eggs, beans and dairy products.

From 12 Months

Babies can now drink whole cows' milk. Choose full-fat dairy products because children under two need the extra fat and vitamins found in them.

You can give your baby:

- Three to four servings a day of starchy food such as potatoes, bread and rice
- Three to four servings a day of fruit and vegetables
- Two servings a day of meat, fish, eggs, dhal or other pulses (beans and lentils)

Spoon feeding:

As soon as babies are weaned they should be involved with the feeding process. As well as finger foods children can be encouraged to use a spoon and feed themselves. When you are feeding your child you could give them a spoon as well as having one yourself. This will encourage the child to be independent when eating and when the time comes for them to learn to feed themselves they will already have knowledge of what a spoon is and how to use it.

Dietary requirements at nursery:

Any allergies, intolerances and religious restrictions are catered for and all staff are aware of each individual child's requirements. Details of dietary requirements are documented within each base room and displayed within our kitchen.