

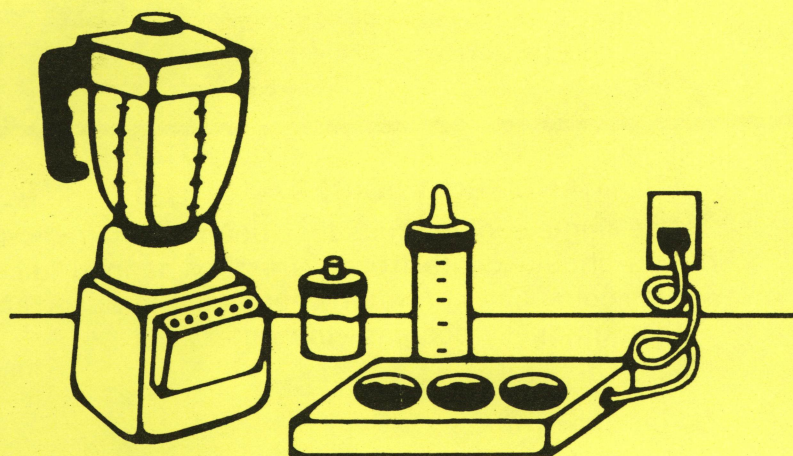


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## Baby Food From Your Kitchen

Breast milk is the natural food for a young baby. If you are not nursing, the main food for baby's first 5 months is one of several types of commercial formulas or an evaporated milk formula. Whole milk can be introduced in the sixth month if you don't wish to continue formula or breast milk.

As baby grows and develops, you may add foods other than breast milk or formula to the diet. *Your decision to feed "solid" food should be based upon the ability of your baby to swallow.* Generally, most babies are ready to take solid foods from a spoon, in addition to liquids, sometime between the fourth and sixth month. Feed solids by a small spoon; only a little will be eaten at first. As baby eats more solid food, the amount of formula or milk will usually decrease to about 16 to 24 ounces by the first birthday.

Many commercial baby foods are available. You may choose to use only commercial products or you may choose to make some or all of your own baby foods. Home-prepared baby foods allow you to add a personal touch and help prepare your baby for the taste of foods that he will be eating later. Special modification in texture lasts only a short time since most babies can handle chopped or cooked finger foods by 10 months of age.

As you make baby food, change the foods in

consistency, texture and taste to suit your baby's needs. You can alter the texture and consistency of foods for baby by pureeing in a blender, or mashing in a sieve or food grinder or with a fork or potato masher. Foods for a young baby should be *bland* and not seasoned by added salt, sugar, herbs and spices.

Electric blenders reduce fruit, vegetables and cooked meat to a puree. Initially you LIQUEFY and blend to desired consistency by adding liquid and lengthening blending time. Follow the directions outlined in your blender book. As baby develops more chewing ability you can reduce blending time or speed to produce desired consistency or you can use a grinder or mash.

When fixing home prepared baby foods, use your common sense and remember the following:

- Use clean hands and equipment
- Use *fresh* food that is washed well before preparation or meat that is freshly purchased or frozen foods (held at or below 0°F) or home or commercially canned fruit which is packed in water or light syrup
- use clean storage containers (covered and suitable for refrigerator or freezer)
- have appropriate refrigerator and freezer temperatures (37 to 39°F in refrigerator and 0°F or below in freezer)

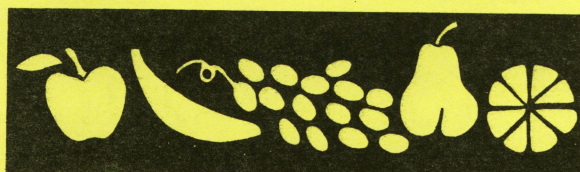


# FOOD CHOICE



## CEREAL

Use single grains first, before combinations. Rice, barley and oat are less allergenic than wheat and corn.



## FRUIT AND FRUIT JUICES

Use single cooked fruits first, before combinations. You should dilute frozen, fresh or canned juices with equal parts of water when first introduced and then gradually decrease the water.



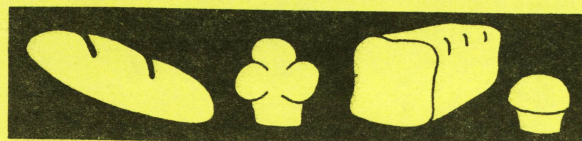
## VEGETABLES

Use single cooked vegetables before combinations. Avoid using canned vegetables or those frozen vegetables with added salt.



## MEAT AND OTHER PLANT PROTEIN SOURCES

Introduce lamb, veal, beef, pork and poultry and then meat substitutes such as cooked dried peas, beans and lentils. Offer cooked egg yolk before whole egg.



## BREAD AND OTHER PRODUCTS

Use products that are made with enriched or whole grains. Limit the use of products containing sugar or other sweeteners.



# S F O R B A B Y

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Iron is the nutrient most needed by infants and toddlers. Commercially prepared dry infant cereals are fortified with iron to a greater amount than hot cereals available for the family. Some brands of cooked cereal have more iron fortification. These are noted below with an asterisk (\*). If you don't use special infant cereals then suitable ones for infants include:

Cream of Rice (rice), Oatmeal (oat), Cream of Wheat\* (wheat), Malt-O-Meal\* (wheat and malt) and Corn Meal (corn).

When making home-prepared hot cereals, omit salt and make with milk or formula. You will need to add more liquid to the cereals than box directions say when you first begin to feed them to your baby.

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Fruits provide vitamins and some minerals to the baby's diet. Commercial infant juices are fortified with vitamin C so when you choose regular juice for your baby you need to select either those with natural vitamin C (such as orange, grapefruit or tomato) or those that are fortified with vitamin C. Read the juice container label.

Commercial infant fruit is available in unsweetened or sweetened varieties. Choose the fruits without added sugar, corn syrup or starch. You usually introduce fruits after cereal because their texture is finer than the other food groups.

You can mash a ripe banana with a fork. You can use home-prepared or canned applesauce as is, or dilute slightly with warm water. You can drain and run cooked or canned fruits through a sieve, food mill, masher or blender. If blended, you can use ripe, fresh fruit without skins, pits or seeds.

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Vegetables contain many vitamins and minerals; baby may need several opportunities to accept the different flavors and textures. Commercial infant vegetables may have other ingredients added to them. All cooked vegetables can be modified in texture and consistency. The stronger flavored ones (such as broccoli and cauliflower), the fibrous ones (such as celery and rutabaga) and white potatoes should be delayed until the baby has good chewing and swallowing reflexes. Sweet potatoes, winter squash, carrots, green beans, asparagus tips and spinach are easy to modify in consistency. Baby can progress to peas, beets, broccoli, lima beans, cauliflower and many others. You can puree, chop or mash cooked vegetables or use them as finger foods.

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Meat provides protein, vitamins and minerals. Babies consuming 24 ounces of milk or formula will not need more than 1 to 2 tablespoons of meat products each day to meet recommended protein levels. Commercial infant meats are available singly or combined with vegetables or with starch products. Meat chosen for baby should be tender, juicy inside pieces and free of gristle, fat and bone.

Preparing meat for baby usually requires a blender in order to produce a suitable consistency. Good protein sources that are easy to fix include cottage cheese, hard or soft cooked egg yolk, moist cooked ground beef, lamb or veal loaf, liver spread or cooked boneless fish.

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Teething babies may like dried, toasted bread slices to chew. After baby can bite foods off and chew well, serve crackers. Other bread and bakery items, and pasta products are not needed by baby in the first year. Sweets and desserts are not appropriate for babies because their limited stomach capacity should be filled only by foods contributing to nutritional well-being and development.



Making your own baby food is not always less expensive than buying prepared baby food. You gain satisfaction by knowing what ingredients are being used. You can take food out of the amount cooked for the family and prepare for baby as you serve the family meal or you can batch prepare baby food.

If you prepare more than will be used in 24 hours then quickly freeze it. To freeze spread it out on a tray in a thin layer or in ice cube trays or in small jars. As soon as food in trays is partially solid, slice or section into portions and place in freezer bags or freezer paper, date and label. Use within 2 months. To preserve nutrients, defrost foods in refrigerator and then warm on the stove or in a microwave oven.

Amounts of food produced by blending varies depending on the amount of liquid added and the natural water present in the food. As your baby grows and develops more feeding skill you may vary the consistency by adding less water and/or decreasing the blending time or you can mash or finely chop the food. A typical serving of home-prepared baby food for babies 6 to 9

months is usually  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cooked cereal, 2 to 4 tablespoons ( $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) fruit and vegetable, 1 to 2 tablespoons meat and 4 ounces ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup) juice.

Sample recipe yields:

One 4-ounce banana mashed will yield about  $\frac{1}{2}$  baby food jar portion — at 26 cents/pound, a serving costs 6½ cents.

Eight ounces of frozen peas, cooked and blended with 3 tablespoons of water yields almost 2 baby food jars — at 69 cents/24 ounce package, a serving costs 6 cents.

One pound of raw carrots, washed, peeled, cooked and blended with 3 tablespoons of water, yields about 2½ baby food jars — at 39 cents/pound, a serving costs about 8 cents.

A 29-ounce can of pears in light syrup (10 halves) drained and blended, yields 2¾ baby food jars of pureed pears — at 69 cents/can, a serving costs 13 cents.

Making your own baby food is a satisfying experience that need not require a lot of time and effort.

**Brand names are used in this publication to assist in understanding the information presented. This use does not imply endorsement by the University of Idaho nor criticism of similar products not mentioned.**

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