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ALL ABOUT WEANING

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ADDRESSING PARENTAL QUERIES

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Parenting Tips, Recipes, Nutritional Facts & More



WHAT'S WEANING



What you need to know!

- Weaning is the exciting time when babies stop being wholly reliant on breast-milk or formula and begin their food adventures.
- Next to fetal period, the first year is the time of most rapid growth.
- Healthy child doubles his birth weight by six months and triples it by 11-12 months.



WHY WEAN



Here's Why!

- As the baby gets older, breast milk or formula does not supply all the nutrients required for his/her growth and development.
- Biting and chewing helps to develop the muscles needed for speech development.
- New tastes and textures introduced during the early stages encourage babies to eat a good range of foods later on in life and ensure that their diet is well balanced.
- Weaning also helps with learning hand-eye coordination, practicing social skills, growth and development.

WHEN TO START

Weaning should be started between 6-8 months of age. Look for signs listed below which indicate that your baby may be ready for weaning.

- Can your baby be easily supported in a sitting position?
- Can your baby hold their head in a stable position?
- Is your baby showing interest in other people eating?

AS PER WHO

When breast milk is no longer enough to meet the nutritional needs of the infants, complementary foods should be added to their diet. The transition from exclusive breastfeeding to family foods, referred to as complementary feeding, typically covers the period from 6 months to 18-24 months of age, and is a very vulnerable period.

WHO statistics clearly states that late weaning leads to anaemia in infants. As mother's milk does not contain sufficient nutrients to sustain growth post 6 months of age.



FOOD CHART

Stage	Age Range	Consistency	Foods
Stage 1	Six months (26 weeks) Not earlier than 4 months (17 weeks)	Smooth pureed food	Fruits, vegetables, rice, potatoes, meat, yoghurt, cheese and custard (before 6 months, foods should be gluten-free*)
Stage 2	6-9 months	Thicker consistency with some lumps; soft finger foods can also be introduced at this stage	Fruits, vegetables, rice, potatoes, meat, fish, pulses, eggs, yoghurt, custard, cheese, bread & cereals.
Stage 3	9-12 months	Mashed, chopped, minced consistency; more finger foods	Fruits, vegetables, rice potatoes, meat, fish, pulses, eggs, yoghurt, custard, cheese, bread, cereals, pasta & teething wafers
Stage 4	12 months and older	Mashed, chopped family foods and a variety of finger foods	Fruits, vegetables, rice potatoes, meat, fish, pulses, eggs, yoghurt, custard, cheese, bread, cereals, pasta and teething wafers

**Gluten-free: Gluten is a protein found in grains such as wheat, barley and rye. A gluten-free diet is one that excludes the protein - gluten.*

IMPORTANCE OF TEXTURE IN WEANING



FOOD TEXTURE

Qualities of food that can be felt with the fingers, tongue & palate/ teeth. It is considered as the index of quality.



When to introduce texture for kids?

Textures are very important while introducing foods to infants. Most babies prefer to start with softer, smoother textures and gradually move toward thicker foods. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that lumpy foods should be introduced around 6 months of age.



Types of Food	Period of Introduction	
Pureed Foods	6 months	Single Ingredient Food
Mashed Foods	6.5-7 months	Combination of ingredients. Thick and creamy consistency
Diced Foods	From the 7 th month	Diced fruits or vegetables as the baby learns to chew
Finger Foods	From the 7 th month or after that	The first teeth should have appeared & gums are strong enough to mash food and swallow well
Increased Self-Feeding	9 months	Baby can pick up and hold things so easily which will encourage self-feeding
Table Food	12 months	Starts Normal food

BENEFITS OF INTRODUCING TEXTURE

Feeding Development goes parallel with speech development

- Lumpier food texture has been shown to support the oral motor skills needed for the development of speech
- The introduction of textured foods is another important sensory input for the development of the central nervous system. This also spurs on the development of increased tolerance for tactile input across the whole body.
- Develops sensory inputs that helps brain development
- Food textures develop sensory inputs that aid brain developmentEarly introduction of lumpy solids reduces the feeding difficulty in children and prevents them from being fussier at their later stages
- Improves the texture dependent movement patterns such as lateral tongue movements
- Introduction of solids with different textures improves the chewing and muscle development which aids in speech sounds later
- Early introduction of lumpy foods facilitates healthy eating habits in babies during their later stages
- Introduction of food texture helps to improve the nutritional status of the baby, by including different foods.

WHAT TO GIVE AND HOW MUCH?

Research tells us that offering different veggies for the first 2 weeks of weaning entices tiny taste buds to love a range of flavours. Breastmilk is sweet, so savoury flavours may be a bit of a surprise for your baby at first. Go gently and don't worry if your baby seems to eat very little – it's all about taste for now. A weaning spoonful or two is often plenty at the start. Babies still get their nutrition from their usual breastmilk at this stage - they need at least 500ml a day



MAGIC OF FINGER FOODS!



- Babies' instincts are to bring whatever is within reach to their mouths – so offer them foods they can pick up.
- Finger foods are a brilliant way to tingle the touch sensors on tiny fingers and for babies to practise hand-eye coordination (they have to concentrate really hard to get something into their mouths without missing).
- Plus, babies love to feel that they have some influence over their world – it makes them feel really good if they can do little things for themselves.

TIPS FOR GENTLE WEANING:

- Make the switch to weaning gradually.
- Research shows us that a child who was offered a variety of flavours at a young age prefers a wider variety of foods when she's older, too.
- Kick starting weaning with green foods may help familiarise her taste buds to tastes other than sweetness.
- Include the father during weaning phase of the child's life
- Introduce sippy cups or cups for the children
- Do not resort to bribing the child with favourite foods
- Remember to introduce new foods at the right interval
- Remember to check the consistency of the food as per the age
- Do not get stressed if the baby takes time to wean, it is a gradual procedure
- This is the age the baby will be teething and may be fussy
- Consult the doctor at times of doubt.

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