

Establishing a good weaning routine

When to start weaning

As your baby develops, their nutritional needs also change. One of the major changes occurs around 6 months of age, when many babies need more nutrients than a milk-only diet can provide. This is when they are ready for weaning.

The Department of Health recommends that weaning starts at 6 months and certainly not before 17 weeks. Because every baby is different and will develop at their own pace, the best way to work out when your baby is ready is to look for the common signs of weaning and let your baby be your guide. If you're still unsure, ask your health visitor for advice.

Planning your baby's weaning routine

The move to solids is such a big milestone for you and your baby, it's quite normal to feel unsure about what and when to feed. Establishing a feeding routine at set times of the day will help your baby get used to their new weaning diet.

The main thing is to take things slowly; try one meal of solid food a day to start with such as breakfast, then move up to two or three a day. You may find that the more solids your baby eats, the less milk they'll want, but it's important to keep up with their milk feeds as they are still a crucial part of your baby's diet. Milk will remain their main source of vitamins, minerals, fats, and nutrients for some time (until they're at least 12 months), and will help to ensure they get all the goodness they need to develop healthily.

Ideal first weaning foods

Your baby's first weaning foods should be as gentle a progression from their milk as possible. So flavours should be simple, and textures smooth. Purées are the perfect first texture and will start to teach them how to swallow solid foods. Many mums begin weaning with baby rice, or Creamy Porridge, their smooth textures, make them ideal as first weaning foods.

With weaning, patience is key. It can take a while for them to learn how to eat and get used to new tastes and textures – which is natural, considering all they've been used to is milk up until now. So just take it slowly and be prepared for lots of dribbling!

If you'd like some more weaning tips, our team of feeding advisors nutritionists and mums are on hand to help. Give us a call Monday to Friday between 8am and 8pm on **08457 623 628**, or use our confidential instant messaging service, Live Chat available from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.