

Making Mealtime Memories

Homemade Baby Food

If your little one is ready for solid foods, making your own homemade baby food allows you to offer a variety of healthy fresh, frozen or canned fruits and veggies. Making your own food can help expose babies to more flavors, which may help them become more adventurous eaters. Also, by managing added sugars and salt, you're in greater control of your baby's nutrition. **Remember to talk with your pediatrician about the best time for your baby to start solids and how to introduce them.** Monitoring for possible food reactions is also important, as is providing foods that contribute key nutrients like protein, iron and zinc.

Directions:

1. Wash your hand and then wash and peel produce and remove any seeds or pits.
2. Cut food into small pieces and boil in just enough water to cover food (soft foods like banana and avocado can be pureed without cooking). Cook foods until soft.
3. Puree food in a blender or food processor.
4. Freeze or can food for long-term storage, making sure to properly seal, date, and label each food! To reheat, simply defrost in the microwave or in a small saucepan on the stove. Serve your homemade puree at room temperature.
5. You can literally puree pretty much any food for your baby! The best foods to start with are sweeter vegetables or less-sweet fruits including: Avocado, Green Beans Peas, Butternut Squash, Zucchini, Pear, Sweet Potato or Apples.
6. If your baby masters these: try things like broccoli, spinach cauliflower, berries, chickpeas, lentils and more!



One example: PEAR puree. Slice about five fresh pears and put pears and water in a large pot. Turn to high heat and bring to a boil. Turn heat down and simmer 20-30 minutes or until soft. Puree in a blender, let cool and then serve or store. This can be done with any fruit or veggie! If you need more inspiration, google has endless recipes!



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Healthy Living With Head Start National Breastfeeding Month

The U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that infants be exclusively breastfed for about the first 6 months, and then continue breastfeeding while introducing appropriate solid foods until your child is 12 months old. Other organizations, such as the W.H.O recommend breastfeeding for even longer.

Some helpful hints for new moms:

- Breastfeed soon after birth and breastfeed frequently: 8 to 12 times in a 24 hour period. This helps stimulate milk production.
- Hold your baby skin-to-skin directly after birth if possible, and maintain skin-to-skin contact often.
- Keep your baby with you in the hospital.
- Only offer breast milk and do not give a pacifier or bottle until breastfeeding is well established
- Get support: take a breastfeeding class before giving birth, and be sure to ask for a lactation specialist at the hospital! Breastfeeding is extremely rewarding but can sometimes be frustrating. It may take time for mom and baby to properly connect, especially while being so exhausted after giving birth! Try not to give up and use help if its available.
- Try different positions such as the cradle hold, cross-cradle hold, football hold, or one side-lying position (*see next page).
- Follow your babies hunger cues and trust your instinct!



Additional tips that may help to increase supply:

Breastfeed often, and once breastfeeding is established, pump after nursing to stimulate supply. Make sure to drink plenty of water, eat a nutritious diet, and try to reduce stress and relax.

Benefits of Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It can also reduce the risk for certain health conditions for mothers.

Breastfeeding can help lower a mother's risk of:

- High blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Ovarian cancer
- Breast cancer
- Research shows breastfeeding also makes it easier for mothers to get back to their pre-pregnancy weight.

According to the New York State Department of Health, **breastfeeding**:

- Supplies all the necessary nutrients in the proper proportions
- Protects against allergies, sickness, and obesity
- Protects against diseases, like diabetes and cancer
- Protects against infections, like ear infections
- It is easily digested – no constipation, diarrhea or upset stomach
- Babies have healthier weights as they grow
- Breastfed babies score higher on IQ tests

Other benefits:

- ⇒ Breastmilk is generally available wherever and whenever your baby needs it.
- ⇒ It is always at the right temperature, clean and free.
- ⇒ No/fewer bottles to clean.
- ⇒ Breastfeeding has little waste, so it is good for the environment.
- ⇒ Cheaper — no formula!!
- ⇒ Breast milk changes constantly to meet babies' needs. The milk changes in volume and composition according to the time of day, nursing frequency, and age of baby to promote healthy growth.



Taking Care Before Baby

Healthy Teeth

Maintaining good oral health during pregnancy is very important. Untreated gum disease in pregnant women can cause harm throughout the body and may be linked to low birth weight/preterm births. If mom has tooth decay, their children are more than 3x as likely to have tooth decay. Additionally, mothers can unintentionally pass cavity-causing bacteria to newborns, increasing children's risk for tooth decay.



How to maintain good oral health during pregnancy:

- ⇒ Make regular appointments
- ⇒ Brush with fluoride toothpaste at least 2x daily
- ⇒ Floss Daily
- ⇒ Drink fluoridated water every day
- ⇒ Talk to a dentist or doctor about ways to prevent or manage dental problems

Healthy Choices for a Healthy Pregnancy

When you are pregnant, you need more of certain nutrients like protein, iron, folic acid, and iodine. It's also important to get enough calcium.

Making smart food choices can help you have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. Here are some ideas to help you eat healthy during pregnancy.

- ⇒ Eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat dairy products, and protein foods.
- ⇒ Choose foods and drinks with less added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium (salt).
- ⇒ Limit refined grains and starches, which are in foods like cookies, white bread, and some snack foods.
- ⇒ If you are feeling sick, try eating a piece of whole-grain toast or whole-grain crackers.

