



Time to Wean! Key Takeaways

Getting Ready to Wean

Help your baby be ready when they get to weaning age by providing plenty of practice with...

- Tummy time
- Oral exploration of textured baby toys and teethingers
- Sensory play
- Seeing others eat

[Top Tips for Preparing Your Baby for Weaning](#)

Signs of Weaning Readiness

- Independent sitting
- Good head control
- Coordination of eyes, hands and mouth
- Tongue thrust reflex has integrated
- Interest in food
- 6+ months

Equipment

Must have:

- [Supportive seating](#)
- Baby spoons and bowls
- Early cup

May want:

- Bib
- Mess mat



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- Feeding net
- Blender or masher
- Freezer food trays

Traditional (parent feeds baby) **vs. Baby-Led Weaning** (baby leads the feeding experience)

Both methods are likely to result in a happy, healthy eater; so choose what works best for you and your baby! (Many families find that a combination of the two methods works well at their table – [Time to Wean? The Three Options at Your Table.](#))

Solid Food by Age^{*1 2}

- **6 months**
 - Smooth puree.
 - Large pieces of stick-shaped foods (long enough so when baby holds the food, there is food poking out above and below baby's fist, and about as wide as two adult fingers pressed together).
 - Soft Finger Foods – foods baby can grab, hold and munch to break down and swallow (e.g., an avocado spear).
 - Resistive Finger Foods – unbreakable stick shaped food teethingers on which baby can munch and practise chewing while getting flavour but no food to swallow (e.g., pineapple core).
 - Fibrous Foods – foods that are resistive enough to hold their shape and gradually break down when baby munches and sucks on them (e.g. asparagus spear).
 - Water from an open cup - [Top Tips for Teaching Open Cup Drinking.](#)

1 See [FoodSafety.gov](#) for guidance re: safe preparation and storage of baby foods.

2 See [Solid Starts](#) for guidance re: food preparation by age.

* This is a guideline only, babies transition through feeding stages at their own pace so follow your baby's lead, if they are finding a particular texture challenging wait a week then re-introduce it.



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- **7 months**
 - Fork Mashed Food.
- **9 months**
 - Chopped and Lumpy Foods (e.g., egg salad).
 - Bite-Sized Pieces of Food
 - Soft, Crumbly Foods – foods that break apart in the mouth (e.g. a soft meatball).
 - Crunchy Foods – foods that encourage biting (e.g., cucumber spear).
 - Scatter Foods – foods that scatter in the mouth (e.g. rice).
 - Introduce Straw Drinking.
- **12 months**
 - Family foods with fingers and toddler cutlery

Tips for Getting Started

- Start when your baby is well rested, happy and only slightly hungry.
- If your baby is not interested, try again later.
- Let your baby explore food with their hands.
- Offer a variety of flavours from the start.
- Include plenty of iron-rich foods.

Weaning Guidelines

- Offer solid food one to two times a day to start, build up to three meals a day by 9 to 12 months.



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- Portion sizes (at the start):
 - Spoon Feeding: 2 to 4 tsp per meal
 - Solid Food (Baby-Led Weaning): 1 to 2 foods per meal
- Snacks after 12 months.
- Regular cup drinking by 12 to 15 months.

Milk Feeds

Your baby will naturally decrease the amount of milk they drink as they increase the amount of solids they eat.

Milk feeds can gradually be replaced by mealtimes or drinks from a cup; bottle fed babies can gradually be offered less volume in the bottle.

Transition away from the bottle by 12 to 18 months. Breastfeeding can continue alongside solid foods as long as you and your baby wish.

Foods to Avoid

- No added sugar or salt.
- No honey before 12 months.
- Full fat cow's milk as a drink not before 12 months (okay mixed in foods from 6 months).
- No soft or unpasteurized cheese.
- No fresh pate.
- No fish high in mercury.



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Allergies

Risk Factors³

- Severe Eczema
- Other Food Allergies

Common Allergens

- Cow's Milk
- Eggs
- Fish and Shell Fish
- Nuts and Seeds
- Soya
- Wheat and Foods containing Gluten

How to Introduce Allergens³

Introduce common allergens early and often to decrease your baby's risk of developing an allergy.

- One allergen at a time, offered early in the day.
- Start small ($\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp) and increase over a few days.
- Leave two to three days before introducing another new allergen.
- Once successfully introduced, offer regularly.

³ Speak to your GP or Health Visitor before starting weaning if your baby has risk factors for food allergies, and see [Preventing Food Allergy in Your Baby](#) guidelines from BSACI for information re: risk factors and how to safely introduce allergens.



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Signs of an Allergic Reaction

- Swelling
- Hives, Increased Eczema, Skin Reddening or Itching
- Abdominal Pain, Vomiting, Reflux
- Loose Stools or Constipation

Weaning Safety

- Always supervise your baby with food or drink and serve food in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Avoid
 - Whole or Chopped Nuts
 - Small, Hard Chocolates or Sweets
 - Popcorn or Marshmallows,
 - Globs of Peanutbutter
 - Small, Round Foods (cut up or smash)
- [Gagging vs. Choking](#)
 - Learn what to do in the case of baby choking - [St John Ambulance](#) (online video).

Key Take Away 😊 Have fun with this feeding transition with your baby. Your baby's enjoyment of exploring and learning about new foods is key in setting them up for a positive relationship with food over the course of their lifetime.

For more information about children's feeding and communication development, please subscribe to our newsletter – [South Lakes Speech & Language Therapy Newsletter](#).