

Preparing Homemade Baby Food

Making Your Own Baby Food is Simple and Can Save You Money

Getting Ready

Always wash your hands.

1. First wet hands and apply soap.
2. Rub well for at least 20 seconds.
3. Rinse well and dry.



Wash equipment and dishes that will touch baby's food during preparation, storage, thawing, heating or serving. A dishwasher is ideal. If washing dishes by hand, use warm soapy water and rinse. Items such as dishes and cutting boards that have come into contact with raw meat should be washed, rinsed and then disinfected in a solution of 5 ml (1 teaspoon) of household bleach and 750 ml (3 cups) of water for 2 minutes. Finally rinse and dry.

For more information on food safety visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-safety-vulnerable-populations/food-safety-information-children-ages-5-under.html>

Cleanliness and food safety is important when preparing, serving and storing food for baby.



To prepare baby food you can use a fork, potato masher, an electric blender or food processor, grater, sieve, or baby food mill or grinder. Remember to take your food mill, blender or processor apart to wash it.

- Some foods, such as bananas, avocados and other ripe fruits, need only a fork for mashing.
- A potato masher works well to puree cooked apples, winter squash, potatoes or carrots. Remove lumps, pieces of skin or seeds before feeding your baby.
- A fine mesh sieve works well to strain cooked foods.
- Most foods can be pureed in a blender.
- A small, hand-operated baby food mill can be used to prepare raw or cooked fruit and vegetables. Peels and seeds are strained out of the food. Its small size is perfect for taking to the table when eating out.

Use what works best for your family. You do not need to spend a lot of money.

What to Serve Baby - Ideas

Use a variety of fresh, wholesome ingredients and foods in season, as well as frozen or canned foods without heavy syrups, sugar or salt.

Start with single foods before offering mixtures of foods. Wait 2 days before introducing a new food.



Cooking Methods

Choose cooking methods like microwaving, steaming, boiling, baking and broiling. These methods help keep the nutrients in the food, especially when short cook times and a small amount of liquid are used.

Family foods prepared with salt, sugar and coatings are not suitable for baby. You will need to remove your baby's portion before adding these other ingredients.

Some foods, like canned pumpkin, unsweetened apple sauce, cream of wheat or canned beans, peas or lentils (well rinsed) can be kept on hand to add to meals.

Always stir food and test food temperature before feeding baby.

Meat and Poultry

- Bake or simmer the meat until well-cooked and tender. Cool.
- Remove fat, skin and bones. Cut the meat or poultry into 2.5 – 5 cm (1 to 2 inch) chunks and put into the food processor.
- Grind the meat first. It should be clumpy.
- Add breast milk, formula, water or left over juices from cooking. Skim off any fat first. Puree the mixture until smooth or to the texture that suits your baby.

Eggs

- One of the simplest iron rich foods to prepare is a well-cooked egg. A well-cooked egg means that both the egg white and egg yolk are not runny.
- Scramble or hard boil the egg to cook it well or fry it in a non-stick pan without any oil or butter.
- Well-cooked eggs can be mashed with a fork and breast milk or formula can be added to make a texture that suits your baby.

Fish

- Select fish such as salmon, bass, sole, cod, perch, pickerel, haddock, sardines or light canned tuna.
- Ensure the fish is completely de-boned. Some fish contains tiny bones so take great care when de-boning.
- Poach, bake or steam the fish. Then puree. Some fish is so tender when cooked that it may just need to be mashed or flaked with a fork or rubbed with your fingers to get texture that suits your baby.

To poach fish:

- Use 250 grams (1/2 pound) of de-boned fish fillets and 125 ml (1/2 cup) of breast milk or formula.
- Pour milk into a pot. Heat gently but do not boil.
- Add fish to the milk.
- Cover and cook on low heat for 5 to 10 minutes or until fish flakes easily.
- Puree or make a texture that suits your baby. Use cooking liquid as needed.

For the latest safety information on fish, refer to Health Canada's website at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/food-safety/chemical-contaminants/environmental-contaminants/mercury/mercury-fish.html>

Cooked Legumes & Nut Butters

- Use 250 ml (1 cup) cooked legumes (peas, beans and lentils). If starting with dried legumes, cook them following package directions. Drain; rinse.
- If using canned legumes, drain liquid and rinse the legumes well.
- Add a small amount of water to moisten.
- Make a texture that suits your baby.
- Blend whole nuts (like unsalted peanuts and almonds). Add water to make a nut butter the consistency that easily spreads on a cracker.

Grains

- Oatmeal, cream of wheat, pasta and rice can be mashed finer to suit your baby's needs.
- Bread crusts and dry toast make good finger foods.
- Infant cereal makes a good thickener for runny dishes.
- Use a blender to grind 125 – 250 ml (1/2 to 1 cup) of uncooked brown rice, cook well until soft and smooth and serve as an inexpensive tasty cereal.

Vegetables

- Use about 250 ml (1 cup) of fresh or frozen vegetables. Carrot, peas, green or yellow beans, squash, sweet potato, broccoli and cauliflower are healthy food choices.
- Add about 125 ml (1/2 cup) of water. Cook or steam vegetables until soft.
- Make a texture that suits your baby.

Fruit

- Ripe, soft fruit such as bananas, melons, mango, papaya, avocado and canned fruit (in water or juice) do not need to be cooked before they are mashed.
- For apples, pears, peaches, and plums wash, peel and core the fruit. Cook in a small amount of water or fruit juice covered on low heat only until tender. Do not drain. Make a texture that suits your baby.

Storing Methods... Save Time and Money



Make extra food to save time later. Store leftover baby food for no longer than 2 days in the fridge. Store food in tightly covered containers in the coldest part of your refrigerator.

You will only need to store purees in a freezer to last about 4 to 6 weeks. After that time your baby will be ready for thicker and lumpier foods with more texture.

How to freeze foods:

Food Cube Method - Pour prepared food in ice cube trays. Each cube is about 60 ml (2 ounces). Cover with plastic wrap and place in coldest part of freezer.

Plop Drop Method - Plop spoonfuls of food onto a cookie sheet. The size of each plop drop can be the size baby is eating at a sitting. Cover with plastic wrap and place in coldest part of freezer.

Once frozen, transfer the food cubes or plop drops into labeled dated freezer bags. Seal.

When ready to use take the amount of frozen food needed and transfer to a microwave safe dish. Place the dish in the microwave oven and set to medium-high for about 30-45 seconds. If you prefer, set the dish in the top of a double boiler and heat. Make sure to stir and test the food temperature before feeding baby.

More information on feeding your baby can be found in the following resources:

- Growing Up Healthy You and Your 6-12 month old
<http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/deplist.cfm?d=13&c=3218>
- Feeding Your Baby in the First Year- Caring For Kids – Canadian Pediatric Society
http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/feeding_your_baby_in_the_first_year
- Feeding Infants and Toddlers – Dietitians of Canada
<https://www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health/Nutrition-A-Z/Infants/Feeding-Infants-and-Toddlers.aspx>