

Time to start solid foods?

Weaning is when you begin to give your baby solid foods alongside breast milk or infant formula. It's a big step for parents and for your baby, and there's so much information out there, it can be difficult to know what to do. Ask your midwife or health visitor for a copy of the NHS advice is to introduce solid foods to your baby from around six months old. This gives your baby time to develop properly so they can

cope fully with solid food. Breast milk is the best food they can have during the first six months.

You'll know that they're ready to wean when they can sit up, hold their head steady, and coordinate their eyes, hands and mouth so they can look at food, pick it up, put it in their mouth and swallow it (rather than spit it back out).

Top tips for weaning:

- Your baby's tummy is tiny, so start by offering them small amounts of solid food
- You can start with single vegetables and fruit – try mashed or soft-cooked broccoli, potato, yam, carrot, apple or pear
- Try moving on to mashed and finger foods as soon as they're ready. Babies love picking up bits of food and feeding themselves. This helps them learn how to chew, bite and swallow solid foods
- Gradually increase the amount and type of food your baby eats and offer foods from the different food groups – vegetables, fruits, starchy foods (like potato, rice and pasta), protein foods (such as meat, fish and eggs) and pasteurised full-fat dairy foods (such as yoghurt and cheese)
- Remember, babies don't need salt or sugar added to their food (or cooking water). Salt isn't good for their kidneys and sugar can cause tooth decay

