



☉ Introducing your child to vegetables

After 6 months of age, the time when you introduce solid foods to your baby, is an important developmental stage. It's just not about the move from milk to solids and it's certainly not about filling them up! Babies at this stage are extremely adaptable and they learn fast. When you start with complementary feeding you are training them what, when and how much to eat. It's a real opportunity to teach them healthy eating habits.

Successfully introducing healthy foods like vegetable can set up good eating habits that can last a life time. Vegetables supply antioxidants, vitamins, minerals and fiber in your baby's diet.



Top tips for parents and caregivers:

- A. Interesting thing about flavor: Newborn babies naturally prefer sweet taste- since breast milk is naturally sweet. Bitter and sour flavors are rejected at first. Interestingly, babies detect the flavor of the foods that their mother eats during pregnancy. Flavors are transferred via amniotic fluid that baby swallows in the womb and, once baby is born, if mum breastfeeds, flavors are transferred through her breast milk. Research shows this can enable greater acceptance of those foods during weaning. So pregnant women and breastfeeding mums should include plenty of green leafy and other vegetables in diet.
- B. Start single vegetables, rather several mixed vegetables together. Variety is the key. Offer your child different vegetables at different meal occasions.
- C. Encourage taste for vegetables: The good news is that children's taste buds will adapt to like vegetables. Research shows that giving the same vegetables to infant over time say 10 times – will increase liking for that vegetables. If something is rejected, just wait for few days and offer again.
- D. Eating healthily yourself and letting your child see you eating the foods you want them to eat is one of the best things you can do to encourage good diet. If you eat well yourself and introduce a variety of vegetables in your diet, you're setting the best example. The more colors there are on your plate, the better.
- E. Think about the environment where your child is eating: make sure the TV is off, sit together and make time for what should be a lovely occasion.
- F. Remember that learning to eat is a new skill and it takes time to get used to new flavors and textures, just like leaning to walk. Try to stay calm and patient, even if you think your child isn't making progress quickly enough.
- G. Brush up on your cooking skills. Ask other mums, you may want to google a bit. Make the food interesting.
- H. Be prepared for the mess! Let them explore their food.
- I. Read the signs your little one is giving you and if it looks like they've had enough to eat, don't try and force them to eat any more.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Breast milk is the best food for babies as it is the sole source of nutrition for the first 6 months of life and is recommended to be continued until 2 years, with introduction to appropriate complementary foods after 6 months of age.

A. Following are the details of advantages, as also nutritional superiority of breast-feeding :

- i)** Immediately after delivery, breast milk is yellowish and sticky. This milk is called as Colostrum, which is secreted during the first week of delivery. Colostrum is more nutritious than that of mature milk because it contains more protein, more anti-infective properties which are of great importance for the infant's defence against dangerous neo-natal infections. It also contains higher level of Vitamin 'A';
- ii)** Breast Milk -
 - a) Is a complete and balanced food that provides all the nutrients needed by the infant (for the first six months of life);
 - b) Has anti-infective properties that protect the infants from infection the early months;
 - c) Is always available;
 - d) Needs no utensils or water (which might carry germs) or fuel its preparations;
- iii)** Breast-feeding is much cheaper than feeding infant milk substitutes as the cost of the extra food needed by the mother is negligible compared to the cost of feeding infant milk substitutes;
- iv)** Mothers who breast-feed usually have longer periods of infertility after child birth than non-lactators;

B. Details of management of breast-feeding, are as under :

- i)** Breast-feeding-
 - a) Immediately after delivery enables the contraction of the womb and helps the mother to regain her figure quickly;
 - b) Is successful when the infant suckles frequently and the mother wanting to breast-feed is confident in her ability to do so;
- ii)** In order to promote and support breast-feeding the mother's natural desire to breast-feed should always be encouraged by giving, where needed, practical advice and making sure that she has the support of her relatives;
- iii)** Adequate care for the breast and nipples should be taken during pregnancy;
- iv)** It is also necessary to put the infant to the breast as soon as possible after delivery;
- v)** Let the mother and the infant stay together after the delivery, the mother and her infant should be allowed to stay together (in the hospital, this is called "rooming-in");
- vi)** Give the infant Colostrum as it is rich in many nutrients and its anti-infective factors protect the infants from infections during the few days of its birth;
- vii)** The practise of discarding Colostrum and giving sugar water, honey water, butter or other concoctions instead of Colostrum should be very strongly discouraged;
- viii)** Let the infants suckle on demand;
- ix)** Every effort should be made to breast-feed the infants whenever they cry;
- x)** Mother should keep her body and clothes and that of the infant always neat and clean,