

Introducing complementary foods: Recipes for babies

Starting complementary or first foods is a time for trying a range of new flavours and textures. Your baby will be eating the same healthy meals with the family by 12 months of age. At younger ages, it is easiest to take part of your family meal and change its texture to suit their development (e.g. a roast for the rest of the family could become pureed vegetables and meat blended with meat juices for baby).

Expressed breastmilk, infant formula or cow's milk may be used to help puree, mash or blend food. Avoid adding salt, sugar or honey to foods. Try making up your own recipes as you become more confident feeding your baby. Here are some to help you get started.

1. Pureed vegetables

Ingredients

- 1 small potato, peeled
- 1 small piece pumpkin peeled
- 1/2 cup carrot, grated
- 1 small piece green leafy vegetable (broccoli, zucchini, lettuce)

Method

Chop all vegetables finely.

Using a steamer or saucepan, bring a small amount of water to the boil.

Add the vegetables, cover with a tight fitting lid and cook quickly until vegetables are soft.

Press vegetables through a strainer or puree in a blender or food processor.

Offer the new food at the beginning of feeding time when your baby is hungry. This will increase acceptance of new flavours.

2. Pureed fruit

Ingredients

Fresh apple, pear, peach, apricot or dried prunes (stones removed)

Method

If using fresh fruit: wash, peel, core and dice it.

If using dried fruit: wash and dice it, then soak it in just enough water to cover it for at least 15 minutes before cooking.

Place fresh fruit or soaked dried fruit and any remaining liquid in a saucepan.

Add just enough water to cover the bottom of the saucepan and cook quickly until fruit is soft.

Press pulp through a strainer or puree in a blender.

3. Pureed meat with sweet potato

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup of lean meat (e.g. chicken, beef, veal, lamb), finely chopped or minced
- 1/2 cup sweet potato, peeled and chopped

Method

Place meat and sweet potato in a saucepan with enough water to cover.

Simmer gently until tender and well cooked.

Press through a sieve or blend to a smooth consistency.

4. Rusks

Ingredients

1 loaf unsliced wholemeal bread

Method

Cut about 4cm of crust from all sides of bread. Cut crusts into fingers.

Spread crusts over a baking tray and bake in a slow oven for about 1 hour until dry.

Allow to cool, then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

Use as required. Store for a maximum of 1 week.

5. Pureed steamed fish

Ingredients

1 fillet of fish

Method

Place fish in a steamer or saucepan with a small amount of water.

Cover and steam until fish is well cooked.

Carefully remove all bones and skin and press through a strainer and puree in a blender.

The fish may be served with white sauce from 9 months.

6. Banana rice pudding

Ingredients

3/4 cup cooked rice

3/4 cup (180mL) expressed breastmilk, formula or full-cream milk (if over 12 months)

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

1/2 banana, mashed

Method

Mix together the cooked rice, milk and banana.

Heat in a saucepan over low heat until milk is absorbed, stirring frequently. Stir in vanilla.

Cool and serve warm or cold.

7. Milk custard

Ingredients

1 tablespoon cornflour

250mL expressed breastmilk, infant formula or milk (if over 12 months)

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

1 tablespoon pureed fruit of choice

Method

Place cornflour and vanilla in a saucepan and mix to a smooth paste with a little breastmilk/formula/milk.

Stir in the remaining breastmilk/formula milk.

Slowly bring to the boil over medium heat, stirring continuously for about 10 to 15 minutes until thickened.

Remove from heat, stir and pour into bowl.

Cool slightly, then put in the fridge to set.

Serve with the pureed fruit.

8. Pureed chicken in white sauce

Ingredients

2 teaspoons flour or cornflour

1/2 teaspoon butter or oil

100mL breastmilk/formula/milk

1 tablespoon finely chopped cooked chicken (no skin)

Method

Over a gentle heat, blend flour and butter/oil in a small saucepan until a paste is formed.

Add milk gradually and stir continuously so lumps don't form.

Bring to the boil and keep stirring until a thick sauce forms.

Add chicken and press through a strainer or puree in a blender.

9. Scrambled egg

Ingredients

1 egg

150mL breastmilk/formula/milk

Method

Whisk egg yolk and milk.

Pour mixture into a frypan and cook over a low heat, stirring occasionally with a fork.

When cooked, cool slightly and serve.

10. Baked egg custard

Ingredients

1 egg

150mL breastmilk/formula/milk

1/2 teaspoon vanilla essence

1 tablespoon pureed fruit

Method

Beat egg, milk and vanilla together.

Pour into an ovenproof dish (about the size of 1 cup/250mL). Stand in a baking dish containing enough water to come halfway up the side of the ovenproof dish.

Bake at 180°C for about 25 to 30 minutes or until set.

Serve warm or cold with pureed fruit.

11. Mince stew

Ingredients

1/4 finely chopped onion

1/2 diced carrot

1/2 stick of finely chopped celery

1/4 cup mince

Method

Sauté onion in a little vegetable oil.

When onion is soft, add in carrot and celery and stir.

When these vegetables have slightly softened, add in mince and brown thoroughly.

Add a little water if needed. This will also help break up the mince and form a sauce.

Resources for parents, families and carers

Brochure: [Healthy eating for children](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n55f_children_brochure.pdf) (https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n55f_children_brochure.pdf) (PDF, 3.35MB), Australian Government

Brochure: [Giving your baby the best start](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n55e_infant_brochure.pdf) (https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n55e_infant_brochure.pdf) (PDF, 350kB)

Growing Strong—[Healthy foods and drinks for children aged 1-4 years](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/nutrition/resources/preganancy-atsih/foods-drinks-1-4-years.pdf) (https://www.health.qld.gov.au/nutrition/resources/preganancy-atsih/foods-drinks-1-4-years.pdf) (PDF, 4.2MB), Queensland Government

Related content

[Introducing complementary foods: Feeding from around 6 months](http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/8/78/412/introducing-complementary-foods-feeding-from)
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[Introducing complementary foods: Feeding from 12 months](http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/8/78/409/introducing-complementary-foods-feeding-from)
(http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/8/78/409/introducing-complementary-foods-feeding-from)

[How children develop: Food and nutrition \(1 to 5 years\)](http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/8/78/372/how-children-develop-food-and-nutrition-1-to)
(http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/8/78/372/how-children-develop-food-and-nutrition-1-to)

Acknowledgements

This information is drawn from:

- Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service 2015, *Child health information: Your guide to the first 12 months*.
- National Health and Medical Research Council 2013, Australian dietary guidelines.
- National Health and Medical Research Council 2013, Infant feeding guidelines.

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