

Infant & child nutrition - FAQ's

Reference resource for Practice Nurses in Tasmania.
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1. When should I introduce solids?

- It is recommended that infants be exclusively breastfed until around 6 months of age. Then the gradual introduction of solids at around 6 months, when they are developmentally ready. Breastfeeding should also be continued.

2. What solids should I introduce first?

- Introduction of solids usually begins with iron-enriched infant cereals.
- Mashed and pureed vegetables and fruit can be gradually introduced to your baby's diet. Introduce vegetables before fruit so that your baby doesn't get a taste for sweet foods first.

3. When can my child start drinking cows milk?

- Full cream cow's milk can be given as a drink once your child is 12 months old. Use only breast milk or infant formula for milk drinks before this.
- Reduced fat milk (2% fat) is recommended from 2 years old. Children under 5 should not be given skim milk.
- Children over 1 year do not need more than 600 ml of milk to drink each day.

4. Are there any foods I should avoid giving to my infant?

- Current recommendations suggest that when introducing solids, there are no particular foods that should be avoided; however it is recommended that all new foods be introduced separately.
- There is no guaranteed way to prevent food allergy. Foods that most often cause allergic reactions are peanuts (e.g. peanut butter) and other nuts, eggs, dairy, soy, wheat (e.g. bread and pasta) fish and shellfish. Cautiously introduce these foods in the morning, and monitor your child for signs of an allergic reaction.

5. Does my child need to drink juice?

- Children do not need to drink juice. Eating whole fruit is best.
- Too much fruit juice can fill your child up so they are not hungry for meals and snacks. Too much fruit juice can also cause diarrhoea and tooth decay.
- If you do offer fruit juice, use 100% fruit juice and dilute it 50:50 with water. Offer no more than ½ glass a day.

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- Water is best. Milk is also a good choice.

6. My child is fussy – what can I do?

- Have a regular eating routine – 3 meals and 2-3 snacks a day.
- Try to have meal times together as a family. Remove distractions e.g. turn the TV off.
- Offer your child the same healthy meals as the rest of the family. Don't start making different meals for different family members.
- Be a role model and show that you enjoy eating healthy food.
- If your child has lost interest in the meal, remove the food without making a fuss. You may want to re-offer the food at the next meal or snack.
- Don't force feed or bribe them to eat. e.g. if you finish your mains you can have dessert. Eating well is something they need to learn to do as a normal part of life – rather than being a punishment or a reward.
- Don't give your child foods such as chips and biscuits 'just so they will eat something'. This will only make the problem worse, as they'll learn this is what they'll get if they refuse other foods.
- They need to know you won't make a fuss or give attention, and that they won't get something else they want. Be consistent and calm.
- Keep offering previously refused foods. It may take many times before your child is willing to try it. Don't just assume they don't like it.
- It is your role as a parent to offer healthy meals and snacks. It is your child's role to decide if they will eat and how much they will eat.

7. What about snacks?

- Young children have small stomachs, so they need nutritious snacks between meals.
- Snacks should be thought of as 'mini-meals' made from every day foods such as – vegetables, fruit, dairy foods, breads and cereals and meat and meat alternatives (e.g. baked beans).
- Snacks contribute a major portion of the child's diet. They are a great opportunity to get all of the nutrients in that children need each day to grow and develop. They shouldn't be seen as 'treats', but an important part of their food intake.
- Just a few snack ideas include – chopped fresh fruit, fruit smoothies, dip with vegetable sticks, corn on the cob, rice cakes or crispbread with cheese and tomato or other toppings, cherry tomatoes, bread fingers with grilled cheese, yoghurt, left over roast meat or a hardboiled egg.

Practice Nurses – for more information, questions and resources please contact the Community Nutrition Unit 6222 7222