



For Aisha's registered dietitian Priya Tew answers some of your questions regarding weaning and nutrition.

Priya Tew is an award-winning dietitian and nutrition professional with a degree in Nutritional Sciences and a Masters in Diabetics. She is registered with the Health Professions Council and the British Diatetic Association.





When is it safe to move from pureed to textured food, and then from textured to solid?

Each baby is very individual and will go through the stages of weaning at different rates. Try to be led by your little one.

Watch how they manage a texture and when they have conquered it try the next stage. Around 7-9 months is ideal to try lumpier textures. By 10-12 months they should be able to manage finger foods. Some babies will start straight away with soft finger foods and that's totally fine too.





Why does the For Aisha range start from 7 months?

All babies will be ready to wean at different stages. Generally this will be around 6 months and your little one will want to start with single flavours, then build on to mixed foods. I'd recommend a vegetable first approach for the first two weeks, then adding in the other food groups. Therefore, the For Aisha range is ideal after the first stage of weaning.





What's the best time of day for weaning?

Start with tastes at the times of day that work for you, around milk feeds. Most people prefer mid-morning. Initially provide one meal a day, and increase to two when you feel your baby is taking a few more mouthfuls. This can be within the first week, but for some it may not be for a while. Every baby is different.





I'm worried about my little one gagging. Is gagging normal?

I know that gagging can be worrying- I remember my first baby gagging on their food! Keep finger foods mushy and soft until you are sure they can manage, and never leave your little one unattended whilst eating. (A little tip- cut up grapes and tomatoes into quarters. Remove the skins and pips, and also any bones).





How much fish can my little one safely eat?

You can give your little one fish from 4 months of age. As a general rule, a portion is the size of the fleshy part of their palm, and 1-2 portions of fish per week is the general recommendation. White fish such as Cod and Haddock can be given a little more often, but oily fish must be kept to no more than 2 portions per week for girls and 4 portions per week for boys. Avoid fish such as shark, swordfish or marlin due to levels of mercury, and stay away from shellfish too.





My baby is now 12 months old, but is still eating primarily pureed food. Is that something I should be concerned about?

By 12 months I would be expecting your little one to be eating pretty normal meals. However some babies will regress to puree when they feel unwell or are teething. Aim for meals to be 20/30 minutes max and encourage her to have finger foods and self-feed as much as possible. If you are concerned then make sure to contact your health visitor.





We are a vegetarian family- does my baby need to eat meat?

It can be completely safe to wean your baby on a vegetarian diet. Just make sure you offer a variety of protein-rich foods such as beans, pulses, tofu, nut butter, soya and eggs. Iron rich foods such as lentils, dried fruit, ready-brek, fortified cereals and leafy greens are also very important.





How do I get my baby to eat with us at the table? All she wants to do is watch her iPad whilst eating.

It can be really hard to break habits like this and as a parent it can make you feel quite mean. Remember that it's important for your little one to be a part of family meals, to watch others eat, socialise and normalise eating together at mealtimes.

Try giving them a toy or a book to look at instead and have the iPad hidden away. Eating with distractions such as an iPad can disconnect us with our hunger levels and signals for when we're full, so it's important to get away from screens at mealtimes. Keep chatting to your baby throughout the meal and make it fun and engaging in other ways





What is the difference between CMPA and lactose intolerance?

CMPA is an allergic reaction to the proteins in cows milk. The immune system reacts, causing symptoms such as skin reactions, digestion reactions and even respiratory reactions. CMPA is usually picked up before your child is 1 year of age. Lactose intolerance is not an allergic reaction and doesn't involve the immune system. Lactose intolerance is caused when there is a lack of the enzyme lactase (which is needed to break down lactose, the sugar in milk.) It is fairly uncommon in children under the age of 5.





Should my 7 month old be having breakfast and dinner or breakfast and lunch?

Whatever routine works for your little one and yourself is completely fine- bear in mind that you will soon want to start offering 3 meals a day anyway as your baby grows bigger!





When should I reduce the amount of milk my little one has?

As your baby eats more, the amount of milk they drink should naturally decrease. Therefore try to be led by them- this is much easier when breastfeeding. By 12 months your little one should get the majority of their nutrition from food, and may only want between 350-600mls of milk in one day. Stick to full fat milk until they're at least 2 years old.





My 17 month old doesn't like rice and keeps spitting it out. Is there a way I can make him like it?

My experience with my own children has taught me that you can't make them do anything they don't want to do! Keep offering rice as it can take up to 16 tastes of a food before they know whether they like it or not. Their tastes and texture preferences also change as they grow. Try another grain, such as couscous and see if they prefer this.





What types of finger foods should I offer when I begin weaning?

It's great to start with veggies that are well cooked and easy to squash; such as carrots, broccoli, peppers, sweet potato, courgette, and aubergine (although make sure to remove the skin on aubergines). You can also offer peeled fruit that's been cut up and had the pips removed. Toast fingers, sliced boiled eggs, pasta shapes, porridge fingers and pancakes cut into strips are also great first finger foods!





Priya's porridge fingers recipe:

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp oats
- 2-3 tbsp milk
- 1tbsp berries

Method:

1. Mix the oats, berries, and milk in a bowl.
2. Press the oats down and drain any excess milk.
3. Microwave on high for 1min 45 secs-2mins.
4. If the porridge isn't thick enough, cook for another 30 seconds.
5. Leave to cool and slice to serve or put in the fridge for the next day!

