

HOMEMADE BABY FOOD



Tips for Making Homemade Baby Food

Making your own baby food is easier than you think!

By making your own food at home you can save money, have control over the variety and texture of food and be confident you're giving your baby the best food available.

GETTING STARTED

You probably already have all the equipment you will need to make baby food.

Common cooking utensils can be used to process food into the right texture:

- **Blender or food processor** to puree foods including meats, vegetables and fruit to a very smooth consistency.
- **Fine mesh strainer** to puree soft cooked or very ripe fruits and some vegetables. Push the food through the strainer with the back of a spoon.
- **Baby food grinder or food mill** to puree most foods to a smooth texture and puree meats to a coarser texture.
- **A kitchen fork and/or knife** can be used for older babies. Foods can be mashed with a fork or chopped finely with a knife.

Be clean! Babies are more likely to get sick from food-borne illness than older children and adults.

Before and after preparing baby food wash hands, utensils, equipment and work areas with soap and hot water.

PREPARING THE FOOD

Wash fresh fruits and vegetables with clean cold running water and remove any pits, seeds, skins and inedible peels. Skins and peels that are edible can be removed either before or after cooking.

Remove fat, gristle, skin, and bones from meat, poultry, and fish before cooking. Tough parts and visible fat can be removed after cooking.

Use different utensils and cutting boards for animal foods such as meat, poultry and fish and non-animal foods such as fruits, vegetables and breads.

Cook foods until they are soft and tender and puree to the right consistency.

For a thinner consistency, add cooking liquid, breast milk, infant formula, fruit juice or plain water to the cooked puree.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Do not add honey to baby's food because it can cause a very serious illness. Honey should not be fed to babies less than 1 year old.
- Do not feed egg whites until your baby is 1 year of age because of the chance of allergic reaction.
- Never give your baby dairy products made from raw, unpasteurized milk.
- Do not add salt, sugar, syrups, spices, ketchup, or extra fat (oil, butter, margarine, lard or cream) to foods prepared for babies.

SERVING TIPS

Allow the food to cool for 10-15 minutes so that it does not burn the baby's mouth. Using a clean spoon, test the temperature of the food before feeding it to your baby.

Use a small dish to feed your baby. Start with a small amount. You can always add more food if your baby is still hungry.

Throw out any uneaten leftover food in the baby's dish.

Don't let freshly cooked foods stand at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

FREEZING THE FOOD

For freezing foods in serving-size quantities try one of the following methods:

Ice cube tray method: pour cooked pureed food into ice cube tray; cover with plastic wrap and freeze.

Cookie sheet method: place 1-2 tablespoons of cooked pureed food in separate spots on a cookie sheet; cover with plastic wrap and freeze.

Once frozen solid, place frozen food cubes or food pieces in a labeled freezer container or a freezer bag in the freezer.

Use frozen food within one month.

WHEN READY TO USE THE FROZEN BABY FOOD

Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator or under cold running water. Do not defrost baby foods at room temperature or in standing water.

Store thawed meats, poultry or fish in the refrigerator and use within 24 hours. Other thawed baby foods can be stored in the refrigerator for 48 hours.

Thoroughly reheat refrigerated or frozen homemade baby foods before feeding them to your baby.

Stir the food and test its temperature with a clean spoon.

Throw out any uneaten leftover food in the baby's dish.

Do not refreeze thawed baby food.

Resource: Infant Nutrition and Feeding. A Guide for Use in the WIC and CSF Programs, <http://wicworks.nal.usda.gov/infants/infant-feeding-guide>



STORING THE FOOD

Refrigerate or freeze homemade baby foods immediately after cooking.

Cover or wrap all foods that are to be stored and label with the date and time they were prepared.

Use refrigerated meats and egg yolks within 24 hours. Use other freshly prepared foods within 48 hours.