

Making Your Own Baby Food

ADVANTAGES TO MAKING YOUR OWN BABY FOOD

- ✓ You can feed your baby some of the very same food you're already having.
- ✓ You can choose exactly what ingredients go into your baby's dishes.
- ✓ You don't have to spend much more on extra kitchen appliances.
- ✓ Your baby can be exposed to all kinds of flavors at a younger age.
- ✓ You will buy fewer items at the grocery store, saving on money and packaging.

HOW TO MAKE FOOD FOR YOUR BABY

❖ Be aware of food safety.

- ◆ Use clean utensils.
- ◆ Wash your hands before you begin.
- ◆ Do not store foods at room temperature, even if they're cooked.
- ◆ Throw away any uneaten food that's been touched by the spoon that's already been in your baby's mouth.
- ◆ Don't share your cutlery with your baby. Adult mouths have a lot of flora in them that can lead to tooth decay if shared with little ones.

❖ Clean, scrub, and trim fruits and vegetables well. Be especially careful with anything that could become a choking hazard, like pits, peels, seeds, and stringy parts that would be difficult to chew.

❖ Serve cooked food, unless the raw food is already soft, like avocados or bananas.

- ◆ Share with your baby the food you were already planning to eat.
- ◆ Make sure to pull some food out for the baby before you add salt or sugar to yours.
- ◆ If your baby has already tried some of the plain, natural food and done well with it, gradually add whatever spices or herbs you normally enjoy with this food. Help your baby develop her palate with this wealth of flavors early!
- ◆ Babies need a moderate amount of fat in their diets for healthy brain development. Once your baby has tried the food by itself and done well, feel free to share your sautéed food with the baby.

❖ Mash, blend, or purée your baby's first solid foods.

- ◆ If your baby is just starting out with solids, blend a single-ingredient food, adding water, formula, or pumped breast-milk if necessary, in order to get a smooth, runny consistency.
- ◆ Once your baby is doing well with smooth purées, move on to lumpier textures promptly. Food can be mashed or run through a food mill so that it has a thicker, lumpier consistency than before.
- ◆ Some foods, like cooked lentils or oatmeal, are already the perfect consistency for older babies to safely "gum" and swallow.

❖ Decide if you'd like to make a number of servings at once or just have the baby share a single meal with you.

- ◆ If you'd like to save some servings for later, pour your purée into an ice cube tray and cover with plastic wrap. Once frozen, the cubes can be popped out one at a time to be thawed and used as single servings for your baby.
- ◆ For lumpier food, you can store serving-sized globs in the corners of zip-lock sandwich bags. Then just untwist a corner when your baby is ready for a serving and return the remaining serving to the freezer.
- ◆ Remember the first-in, first-out rule and serve your baby the oldest servings in your freezer before the newer ones. Frozen servings are usually at their best for about three months.
- ◆ If you're just sharing a meal with your baby and not stocking up, try using a manual food mill at the table. That way baby sees that you're sharing food right off your plate with her and she learns by example that it's enjoyable to eat food together. Just make sure the texture is appropriate for her stage.

❖ Thaw, reheat, and serve!

- ◆ Frozen baby food can be thawed in the refrigerator, on the stovetop, or even in the microwave.
- ◆ Remember to keep food out of the danger zone (39° - 140°F), so don't thaw on the countertop, because food-spoiling bacteria love room temperature.
- ◆ If you're thawing on the stovetop, it's best to heat up a pot of water and place the serving you're thawing in a smaller bowl or pot that goes inside it.
- ◆ If you'd rather save time, microwaving the food is fine, just be sure to use a glass, not plastic. Heat the food for just a few seconds, stir it, and test its temperature. Microwaving can lead to hot spots in food, so it's essential to stir for even heating. Many babies enjoy tepid food, so there's often no need to make the food as hot as you'd prefer it.
- ◆ Start with a small serving. Remember that any food that your baby's saliva has contaminated needs to be thrown out and not saved for the next meal, so it's best to start out with as little as you think she'll eat at a sitting, not the maximum.

FOR MORE IDEAS AND INFORMATION, SEE:

<http://wholesomebabyfood.momtastic.com>

<http://www.superbabyfood.com>

<http://homemade-baby-food-recipes.com/babys-first-foods>