

STARTING A BABY FOOD EXCHANGE

By Lori Goodwin, June 8, 2011

Baby food exchanges are a great way to have a variety of homemade organic first foods available to you. Members basically make batches, portion them out, freeze and exchange. It's a good idea to agree on foods each member will make in advance for each "Exchange" (use the Solid Food Tips Cheatsheet) and to leave off foods that a baby has a known allergy to (in addition to the potential allergens listed).

What you'll need:

- Ice Cube Trays (2-3)
- Freezer Bags you can label (or jars)
- Sharpie (or labels)
- Steamer
- Puree capability (blender or food grinder, or a masher if you like the low-tech)

Make a batch so that each baby participant can have about a week's frozen servings.

Freezing right into ice cube containers is a great idea – and 2 cubes is about 1 serving. So if you're aiming for 7 servings, you'd pack 14 cubes into each participants freezer bag or jar. You can use recycled baby food jars too for yourself or others if you have extras, just remember to leave room at the top as the food will expand once frozen.

Start an email list or thread with all the participants and arrange for drop offs of food at playdates or meetings (if you're continuing with those).

Some other tips:

- Try to use organic fruits and vegetables (particular for thin skinned items like strawberries, peaches etc)
- Wash your hands well for at least 10 seconds before preparing all foods, make sure your surfaces and equipment is clean.
- Be sure to wash and trim off the parts that could be a choking hazard like peels, pits and seeds.
- Steam your vegetables as opposed to boiling them, it helps to preserve the nutrients. There is no need to add salt or sugar to your baby's food, it could be overwhelming to their body's systems, and you don't want them to develop a taste for it too early. It's ok to add subtle spices – like cinnamon (great with sweet potatoes & applesauce).
- Labeling your own containers and the separated portions with the name and date, this can help with keeping the foods fresh and avoiding the question "what is that and when was it made make it?"
- When feeding baby, to avoid waste start out with a small portion to feed your baby then gradually add more using a clean spoon.