

COOK BOOK FOR BUB

JAJUM BAJARA



STARTING SOLIDS



Yulu-Burri-Ba
Aboriginal Corporation
for Community Health

Introducing Solid Foods

Starting solids can be an important milestone in your baby's overall development. Learning how to pick food up, transfer it to their mouth, eat from a spoon or their fingers and chew, while experiencing different tastes, textures, colours and flavours will help your baby understand food.

At times it may be challenging to support your baby's independence when they're learning how to choose, eat and share food. This can be a frustrating time, taking lots of time and practice to get right.

You will be an invaluable role model for helping your child adopt a positive attitude towards food. Eating the right foods now will be one of the most important times of your child's life. What they eat now provides the building blocks for a healthy body and mind, and what they learn to eat can form the foundation for their eating habits later in life.

The Importance of Solid Foods

Mental and physical development occurs rapidly in the early years. It's important for babies to have adequate nutrients and energy to fuel their growth.

During growth spurts, you may notice your baby wants more than their usual milk feed. Delaying the introduction of solids can limit nutritional intake and may cause reluctance to try new foods later.

When to Start

Australian national guidelines recommend introducing solid foods at around six months of age and not before 4 months, when infants are physiologically and developmentally ready for new foods, textures and modes of feeding. They also need more nutrients than what can be provided by breast milk or formula alone.

The energy infants obtain from complementary (solid) foods is small at first, so breast milk or formula should remain the main milk drink until your baby is 12 months of age. It's also important to continue to offer breast milk or formula past six months, as the nutrients in milk support healthy growth and development.

Signs Your Baby is Ready for Solid Foods

Your baby may be ready for solid foods when they:

- Start to reach for your food and show an interest in what is happening around them.
- Can sit up with some support and are able to hold their head upright and steady.
- Open their mouth in readiness for a spoon.
- Show signs of being able to transfer food from the front to the back of their tongue and then swallow (losing the “poke-the-tongue-out” reflex is a clear sign that solid food can be offered from a spoon).
- Show signs that they are still hungry after milk feeds or don't seem to be satisfied by milk alone and are looking for more.
- Become more active and their energy requirements increase, usually when they are becoming more mobile such as rolling or even beginning to crawl.

Why Can't I Offer Solid Foods Earlier?

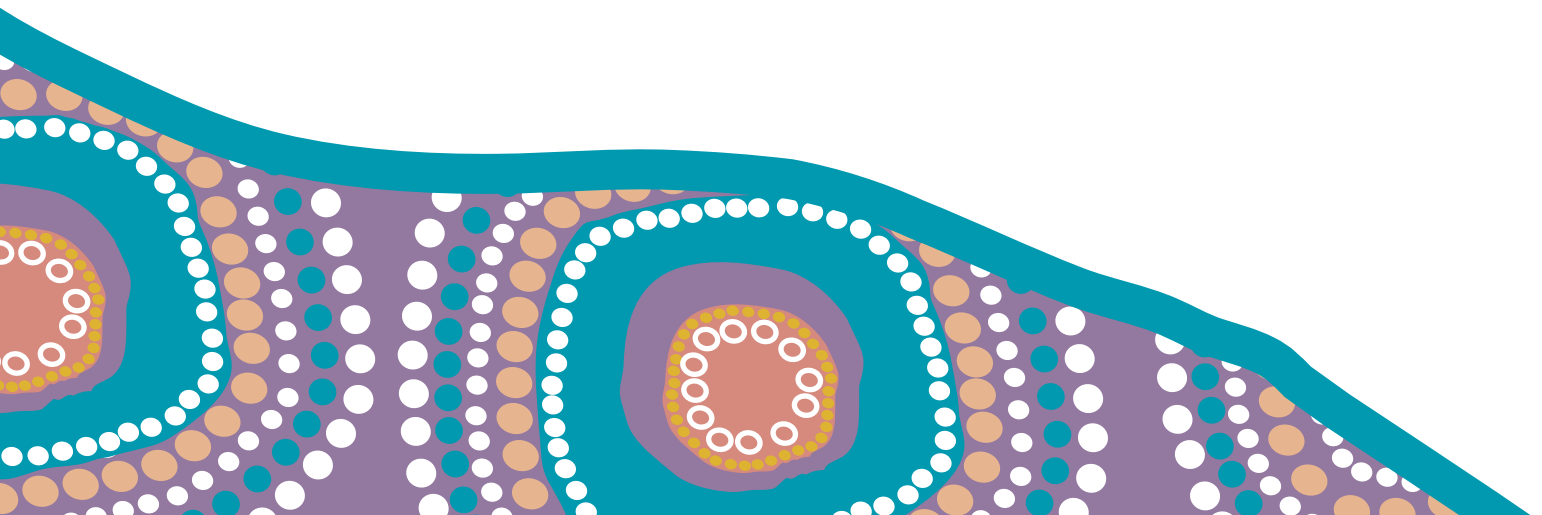
Breast milk or infant formula contains all the nutrition babies under six months needs. Offering solids before they are ready may:

- Put a strain on immature organs such as their digestive system and kidneys.
- Increase their risk of infection, because of their immature immune system.
- Lead to constipation and reduced milk consumption.
- Make them not want to feed as strongly at the breast, which can have an impact on a mother's breast milk supply.
- Increase their risk of developing allergies if introduced before 4 months.

What is the Impact of Introducing Solid Foods Later?

Introducing solids later than six months may:

- Result in your baby missing out on vital nutrients, such as iron and zinc.
- Slow their growth because breast milk or formula alone is insufficient.
- Delay their motor skill development, particularly chewing.
- Reduce their acceptance of new flavours and textures.
- Increase their risk of developing allergies if introduced after 7 months.



Which Foods Do I Offer First?

Start with nutritious iron-containing foods to help prevent iron deficiency. Good choices are iron-fortified rice cereals, pureed meat and poultry dishes, cooked plain tofu and pureed legumes. Iron-fortified rice cereal is simple to prepare and can be made to different consistencies. It also easily mixes with other introductory foods, like pureed vegetables and fruits. Take particular care with a plant-based diet to ensure that supplies of iron are adequate.

Introduce new foods on their own or mixed with other solid foods. Iron rich, nutritious foods are ideal. Increase textures as your baby develops. Aim for a variety of family-home cooked food.

Cow's milk products including full-fat yoghurt, cheese and custard can be given, but cow's milk should not be offered as a main drink before 12 months of age.

Is it OK to Feed My Baby Processed Food?

Home-cooked food is preferable for all sorts of reasons, but sometimes when your time is limited or you're away from home. Processed food can be fine to offer your baby. It can be hard for babies who are only fed processed foods to transition to family-foods if they're not used to them. Processed foods tend to be smooth in texture and don't promote muscle development from chewing. They are often blended with other foods, so individual flavours can be masked.

How Do I Start?

The texture of food should suit an infant's developmental stages. During the first stage, offer very soft, smooth pureed foods which are easy to swallow and don't require any chewing. Then, progress from mashed, then minced and chopped foods during the 6-12 month period. Foods with increased textures help develop chewing muscles used for talking. By around eight months of age, most babies can manage to eat "finger food". By 12 months of age, they should be eating a wide variety of foods, including healthy choices eaten by the rest of the family.

The best time to start offering solid foods is after a milk feed, when your baby is not too full to drink their milk.

Be careful about offering your baby too much to eat. Be aware of their signals telling you they've had enough. Turning away, spitting food out, pushing the spoon away and becoming grizzly are all signs they don't want any more.

Sometimes children need to be exposed to a new food 10-20 times before they accept it. Infants are normally suspicious of anything new.

What to Expect

Mess and chaos! Keep a sense of humour and tolerance and you'll find getting your baby onto solids will be much easier. Although it can be an exciting stage for parents, not every baby is keen to eat solid foods when they are first offered. If your baby isn't interested in a particular food, try leaving it for a week before offering it again.

Most babies have changes to their bowel motions once they are digesting foods other than milk. The consistency, colour and smell can change and it's not unusual to recognise the foods they've eaten by what's in their nappy.

Foods to Avoid

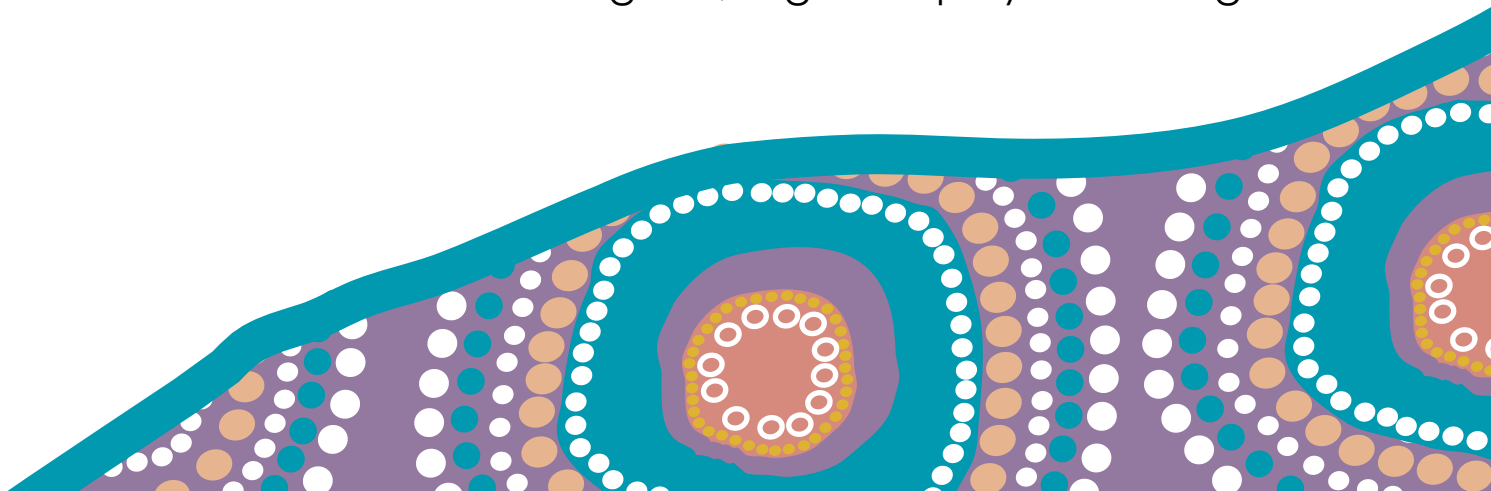
- Small, hard foods that can be choking risk, such as whole nuts, popcorns, lollies and raw or undercooked hard vegetables and fruits like uncooked carrot and apple.
- Cow's milk should not be the main milk drink until 12 months of age. In the meantime, small amounts can be used when preparing solid foods.
- Nutrient-poor foods with high levels of saturated fat, added sugars or added salt (e.g. cakes, biscuits, potato chips and other snack foods).
- Tea, coffee, energy drink or sweet drinks, such as soft drink, cordial and juice, or any other highly sweetened foods. Fruit juice is not recommended for infants under 12 months of age.
- Honey is not recommended until after 12 months as it can contain spores of a harmful bacterium called *Clostridium botulinum*, which can cause serious health issues in babies less than 12 months.
- Raw or undercooked eggs, which may contain salmonella bacteria.
- Extra sugar and salt flavour food, as babies benefit from learning about natural flavours. Salt can be unsafe because infant kidneys are immature and unable to excrete excess salt.
- For toddlers, avoid sweet or salty "snack" type foods. Many foods wrapped in plastic tends to be high in added sugars, salts and saturated fats, which contribute to the risk of childhood obesity. Filling up on unhealthy snacks can mean your child's appetite is affected and they may not be as hungry for nutritious foods.

Recognising a Food Allergy

- Food allergies and intolerances are common, especially if there is a family history. There is a difference; an allergy is when the immune system triggers a response, usually to specific proteins in food, whereas an intolerance is a reaction that does not involve the immune system.
- Typical symptoms are rashes, vomiting, diarrhoea, facial swelling and occasionally, breathing difficulties, which can appear within minutes, hours or even days after eating.
- The most common foods that cause allergies are those containing cow's milk, wheat, nuts, soy, eggs and shellfish. If you have a family history of allergies or if your child shows any signs or symptoms, seek medical advice from your healthcare professional.
- Currently, there is little evidence to suggest that delaying solid foods past 6 months reduces allergy risk. This also applies to more common allergenic foods. Breastfeeding when solids are first introduced may be protective against food allergies.

Sharing Mealtime with the Family

- Babies can share age-appropriate family food from the start. Including them in family mealtimes helps build their sense of connection and learn how to be social with others around them. Large plates and cutlery can overwhelm babies so it's also a good idea to serve meals from a small plate or the tray of their highchair.
- When preparing the family meal, separate your baby's meal first before adding salt, sugar or spicy seasoning.



Ideal Foods

Begin introducing solids by offering well pureed, soft, smooth foods that don't require chewing such as pureed meats and vegetables. Iron-fortified rice cereal mixed with breast milk, water or infant formula has a mild flavour and can look like a smooth semi-liquid. Babies find it delicious especially when combined with other foods like pureed fruits such as apple or pear.

Some great combinations to add to iron-rich foods such as pureed meat, chicken, fish or legumes include:

Veggie Combos

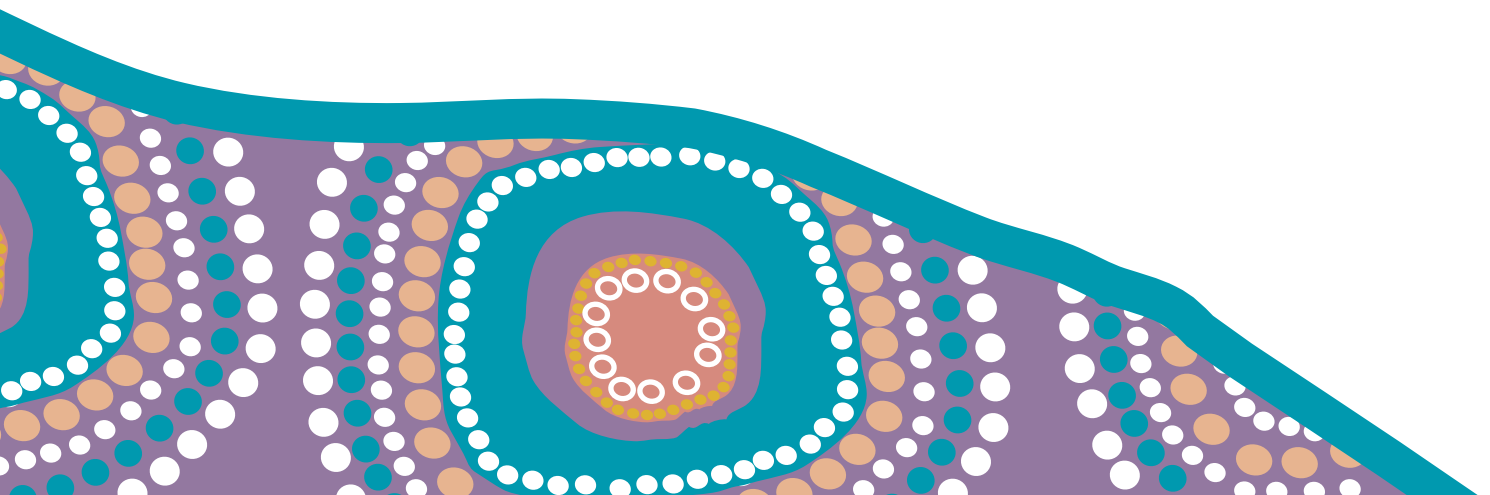
- Pumpkin, sweet potato and broccoli.
- Pumpkin, carrot and apple.
- Zucchini, yellow squash and potato.
- Green beans and sweet potato.
- Green beans, yellow squash and potato.
- Pumpkin and potato.
- Cauliflower and carrot.
- Cauliflower, potato and carrot.
- Avocado and pumpkin.
- Broccoli and potato or pumpkin.

Fruity Combos

- Melon and banana.
- Pawpaw and banana.
- Apple and pear.
- Pear and peach.
- Dried apricots stewed, soaked and pureed.
- Dried apricots, peaches and sultanas stewed and pureed.
- Avocado and banana (yes, many babies love it!)
- Avocado and apple.

Key Things to Remember

- Continue offering milk feeds before solids.
- Be patient and don't expect your baby to love new tastes the first time they try them.
- Offer solid food from a spoon and encourage your baby to feed themselves as well. Solid foods should not be added to a bottle.
- At first, expect some mess and lots of spitting out – getting used to eating takes lots of practice!
- You can cook in advance and freeze solid foods until you're ready to use them. Try freezing individual portion sizes in an ice-cube tray and then storing the cubes in an airtight plastic bag. Remember to be careful about sensible hygiene and storage.
- If you can see your baby's teeth, clean them each day. The best time to do this is during bath time with a soft washcloth.



Apple Banana Creamed Rice

Makes 3 serves

1 cup	breast milk or prepared formula
¼ tsp	vanilla essence
¼ cup	white Arborio or medium grain rice
½	small red or green apple, chopped
½	small banana, chopped
	a few drops lemon juice
¼ tsp	ground nutmeg or cinnamon

To cook in a saucepan:

Combine breast milk/prepared formula and vanilla in a medium saucepan and bring to boil, stirring occasionally. Gradually stir in rice, apple, banana tossed with lemon juice and nutmeg. Cover and cook over low heat for 45 minutes, stir occasionally, or until rice is tender and most of the liquid is absorbed. Serve warm or chilled.

To bake in the oven:

Pre-heat oven to 290°C (180°C fan forced). Sprinkle rice and fruit evenly over the base of a lightly greased dish. Whisk breast milk/prepared formula and vanilla, pour over rice and sprinkle with nutmeg. Cover with lid or foil. Place dish in a deep baking dish and add enough hot water to come half-way up the sides around the dish. Place in a hot oven for 30-45 minutes or until rice is tender. Remove from oven and let stand to allow any remaining liquid to be absorbed. Serve warm or chilled.

Tips:

- Add other chopped fresh or canned fruit in natural juice or blueberries to rice before cooking.
- After cooking, stir through thick natural yoghurt for a thicker, creamier texture.
- If you prefer to use vanilla bean pods, simply slice open the vanilla bean pod and scrape the seeds into the bowl with the breast milk/prepared formula.

Baby Guacamole

Makes 1 cup

A squeeze	of lemon juice
$\frac{1}{2}$	ripe avocado
1 tbsp	yoghurt or ricotta cheese

Mash the avocado and mix all the ingredients together to a smooth or lumpy consistency. You can also add 1 tablespoon of iron-fortified rice cereal for an added source of iron.

Baby Veggie Soup

Makes about 5 cups/serves

1 tbsp	vegetable oil
1 cup	onion, diced
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	sweet potato, diced
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	potato, diced
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	carrot, diced
750mL	salt reduced stock (chicken or vegetable or diluted stock cubes made up)
300mL	breast milk or prepared formula
415g	tomato puree, canned
	Cooked pasta or rice (optional)

Heat oil in saucepan and cook onion until translucent. Stir in vegetables, tomato puree and half the stock. Simmer until the vegetables are soft. Puree to a desired consistency and return to heat. Blend breast milk/prepared formula with remaining stock and use a stick blender to puree soup. Bring to the boil and serve. Add the cooked pasta or rice, if desired.



Couscous and Pumpkin

Makes 1 serve

¼ cup	salt reduced stock (Chicken or vegetable)
1 tbsp	instant couscous
60 mL	breast milk or prepared formula
1 ½ tbsp	cooked pumpkin, mashed

Place couscous and stock in a microwave safe bowl. Cover and microwave on high for 1 minute and 30 seconds. Stir through breast milk/prepared formula and let stand for 2 minutes. Stir through pumpkin and microwave on high for another 20 seconds. Stand for 1 to 2 minutes then serve.

Tomato and Zucchini Pasta

Makes 1-2 serves

2 tbsp	stelline pasta (tiny star-shaped pasta, available from delicatessens)
1 tbsp	of margarine
1	small skinned, finely diced tomato (make a slit on top of tomato and place into bowl of boiling water. After 2 minutes, carefully lift out, and the skin should be easily removed)
1	small (or ½ large) zucchini, grated a handful of grated cheese

Cook the pasta in boiling water until soft. While the pasta is cooking, sauté the chopped tomato and zucchini in margarine in a small saucepan. Once the veggies have softened, drain and mix together all ingredients. Sprinkle with cheese and stir through.

Fish Fillet with Pea Yoghurt Mash

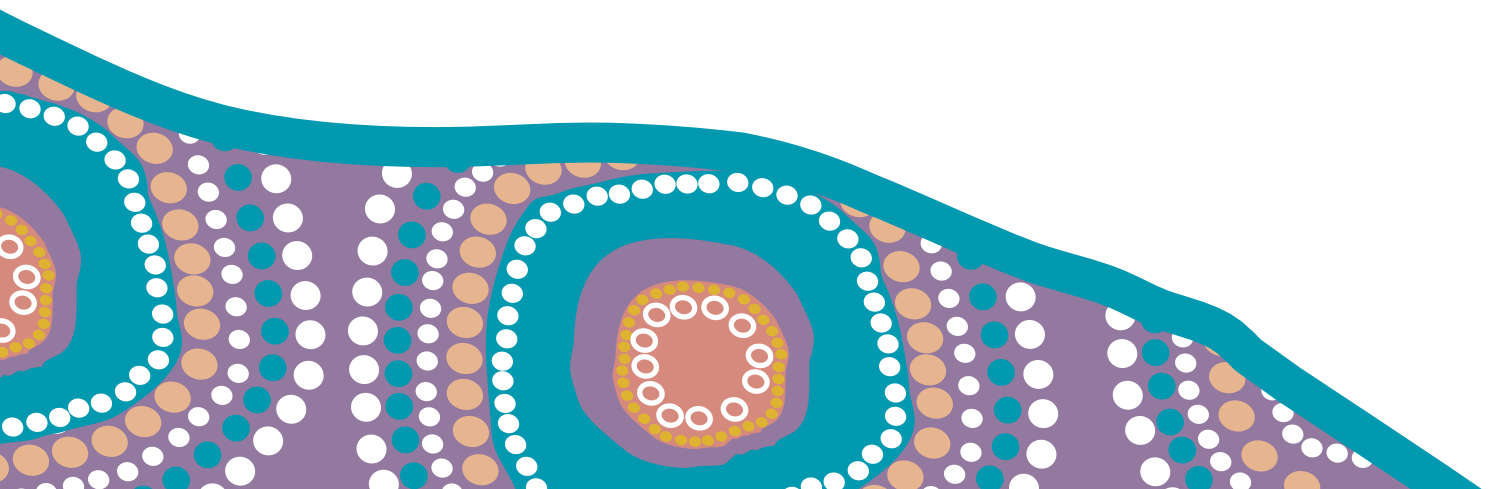
Makes about 2 serves

½ cup	fresh or frozen green peas
¼	small onion, finely chopped
1-2 tbsp	breast milk, prepared formula or thick natural yoghurt
	generous squeeze of lemon juice
100g	white fleshed fish fillet, skinned and boned (e.g. bream, flathead, ling, snapper)

Gently simmer peas and onions in water until tender. Alternatively, place peas and onion in a covered microwave dish and microwave on high for 2-3 minutes or until tender. Puree or mash and stir through breast milk/prepared formula or yoghurt and lemon juice. Place fish and 1 tablespoon of water in a microwave container, cover and cook on medium heat for 2-3 minutes depending on fish thickness. Allow to stand for 1-2 minutes. Flake the fish and carefully fold through the pea mash.

Tips:

- Add chopped fresh mint to pea mash for extra flavour.
- Mild paprika can be sprinkled over the fish before cooking to give the fish added flavour.
- Fish may also be grilled, baked or pan fried over moderately high heat until cooked.



Na-Na Pud

Makes 2 serves

1	egg yolk
1 tbsp	rice cereal
1 cup	breast milk or prepared formula
½	small ripe banana

Pre-heat oven to 180°C (160°C fan forced). Mash all ingredients together and stir well. Pour into individual ramekins or oven-proof cups and place in an oven dish with warm water. Bake for about 30 minutes.

Creamy Fruit Jelly

Makes 6 serves

1 (85g)	fruit jelly packet (see Tip below for how to make your own to reduce added sugar content)
200mL	boiling water
150mL	breast milk/prepared formula
1 cup	canned pears, drained and finely diced

Dissolve jelly in boiling water and let cool for 5 minutes. Add breast milk/prepared formula to jelly, add pears and stir. Pour into moulds and refrigerate.

Tip:

- You can make your own jelly with freshly squeezed fruit juice, which has no added sugar. Heat 300mL 100% fruit juice and 100mL water in a saucepan over medium heat. Turn the heat off and sprinkle 1 tablespoon of powdered gelatine over the juice and stir until it dissolves. Set aside to cool then pour into moulds and refrigerate.