

Making Baby Food



Tips to Get Started

- **Wash your hands and clean all equipment** you will be using with soap and hot water, and rinse well before you start making baby food.
- **Use fresh foods if available**, but canned and frozen foods without added salt or sugar are also fine.
- **Mash with a fork or potato masher.** You can also make baby food using a blender, food processor or food grinder. Some foods will need to be cooked before mashing.
- **If you taste the foods** you are preparing, use a separate spoon and not the cooking spoon.
- **Offer new foods one** at a time and wait at least 7 days between new foods. Reactions may include upset stomach, diarrhea or rash.
- **Wait until your infant** is at least 6 months old before feeding them home-prepared spinach, beets, turnips, carrots or collard greens because they may contain too much nitrate, which can cause methemoglobinemia (also called blue baby syndrome).

Carefully Prepare the Baby Food

- Wash, peel and remove seeds from fruits and vegetables.
- Remove bones, skin and visible fat from meats.
- Cook foods until tender and fully done. Do not overcook.
- Use only a small amount of drinking water to cook the food, and cover the pot or pan.
- Blend, grind or mash the cooked food. Add liquids, such as cooking water, juice, breastmilk or iron-fortified formula, or infant cereal to make it the thickness your baby likes.
- The baby food can be made from the same food you make for your family, but take out your baby's portion *before adding seasonings*. Do not add salt, sugar, spices, butter or margarine, honey or gravy to baby's food.
- **Use extreme caution if defrosting, heating or cooking baby foods in a microwave oven, and always stir food well before feeding it to your baby.** Microwaves can heat unevenly and form hot spots that could burn your baby's mouth.

Store Baby Food Safely

If baby food is not served right away, refrigerate or freeze it. Refrigerated baby food should be covered and used within two days.

Freezing Baby Food

Baby foods can be frozen in clean ice cube trays. Remove the food cubes from the tray when they are frozen solid. Put them in a freezer bag or container, and label with the name of the food and date prepared. Use frozen baby food within one month.

