

# Government guidelines for child nutrition



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## GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES ON FOOD AND NUTRITION

The UK Department of Health guidelines (May 2003) recommend breast feeding exclusively for the first six months, as this should meet all baby's nutritional needs. Most babies should not need solid food before the age of six months. Milk is still the major food, it is very important to remember, when baby starting solids, that milk is still the best and most natural food for growing babies. In the first few days of breastfeeding is a very important source of antibodies which help to build up a baby's immune system. It is also medically proven that breastfed babies are less likely to develop certain disease in lester life. Good.

Milk should contain all the nutrients our baby needs to grow. There are 65 calories in 120ml/4 fl oz milk, and formula milk is fortified with vitamins and iron.

Cow's milk is not such a good food for human babies so is best not started until baby is one year old.

Between four and six months babies should have 600-800 ml/ 21-28 fl oz breast or infant formula each day. 600 ml/ 21fl oz is enough when solid are introduced.

For most babies who eat fresh food in sufficient quantities and drink formula milk until the age one year, vitamin supplements are probably unnecessary . However in the UK the Department of Health recommends that if your baby is being breastfed(breast milk does not contain enough Vitamin D) or is

drinking less 500 ml /18 fl oz of infant formula a day mother should give baby vitamin supplements.

Vitamins are necessary for the correct development of the brain and nervous system. Vitamins are essential for all types of growth and development and they can be found in many forms.

A healthy, balanced diet, coupled with daily physical exercise, is crucial to the development of children. It is not simply sufficient to serve healthy meals and snacks; it is vital that children understand the importance of eating a healthy balanced diet so that they themselves are more likely to choose healthy options when given a choice.

Diet is all about educating the individual to understand the importance of eating sensibly while understanding that they can enjoy food.

Food habits are developed during childhood which will affect us for all our lives and this is way it is important for children to develop healthy eating habits from the outset.

Establishing healthy eating habits in the early years will encourage children to eat sensibly throughout their lives, promote normal growth and development and protect against disease in later life.

#### RECOMMENDED FOOD AT AGE OF 6 MONTH TO ONE YEAR

BABY'S AGE	TYPE OF FOOD	STARCHY FOOD	VEGETABLES AND FRUIT	MEAT AND MEAT
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## ALTERNATIVES

	starts			
	with a			
	fine		pureed	small amount
	semi-		cooked	of pureed lean
	liquid		carrots,	soft-cooked
6	puree	baby rice	parsnip,	beef, lamb,
monts	mixed	cereal	apple, pear,	pork,
	with		mashed	poultry, pureed
	milk, or		banana	lentils
	cooled			
	boiled			
	water			
7-9	mashed	try white	cucumber,	introduce a
months	or	or	green beans,	little
	chopped	wholeme	leek, peas	boneless white
	, finger	al bred,	mushroom,	fish(cod or
	food	pasta,	onion,	haddock)
		rice,	sweetcorn,	hard boiled egg
		noodles,	tomato,	yolk(no egg
		couscous	mango,	white
		porridge	melon,	until nine
			strawberries,	

grapes  
 (seedless)  
 months)  
 most home-made meat and meat  
 foods should pizza, alternatives:  
 now be chips, sliced  
 mashed cakes, encourage  
 or puddings baby to eat ham, chicken or  
 9-12 raw fruit and turkey, and  
 months chopped and small  
 , and biscuits lightly  
 some are cooked chopped  
 left healthier vegetables sausages make  
 whole alternativ as snacks good finger  
 for baby es to food; introduce  
 to chew shop- boiled eggs or  
 on bought omelette.

One child can offer one aim to serve start to include  
 year now eat serving of four portions oily fish such as  
 onward most potato, a day-offer salmon  
 s family pasta, as snacks or mackerel and  
 food; bread, blend into a pilchards;  
 now can rice or stew or soup. carefully  
 safely couscous

at every  
meal;  
limit very  
starchy  
introduce food such as crisps,  
e honey pastries  
or other  
savoury  
snacks  
remove small  
bones from fish

## SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Childminders should always discuss with the parents of the children in their care which meals they will be expected and what food should be given. It is absolutely paramount when preparing meals that childminder take into consideration factors such as culture and religion and ensure that the food they provide is in keeping with the parents wishes.

It is important to recognise and cater for differing dietary needs and this should not only be the case if you are caring for a child from different culture from your own. All children should be introduced to variety of different food and you can do this by offering foods which are associated with certain religious festivals. For example, the Christian tradition of serving mice pies at Christmas and pancakes on Shrove Tuesday can be done alongside offering Chinese food to celebrate the start of the Chines New Year, or poori to celebrate Diwali.

Diets vary immensely and can differ according to belief or preference.

Vegetarianism for example, may be chosen for several reason including religious or cultural beliefs or simply concern for welfare of animals.

A food allergy is an abnormal response of immune system to what is otherwise a harmless food. Ninety per cent of all food allergy reactions are caused by just eight foods. These food are:

- milk
- peanuts
- eggs
- tree nuts, including almonds, pecan and walnuts
- fish
- shellfish
- wheat
- soya

Symptoms of an allergic reaction can be varied but will usually include:

- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- eczema
- wheezing
- cramps
- difficulty in breathing

Childminder must always respect a child's cultural background regardless of whether the culture is their own or not. They should use their knowledge and understanding to encourage children to learn about other cultures in a positive way. A child's culture can have a huge impact on their development.

It is absolutely paramount that childcare practitioner work in partnership with the parents of the children placed in their care to ensure a good relationship which is beneficial to everyone concerned.

Practitioner need to take time to talk to the child's parents to ascertain a suitable strategy for caring for their child and to ensure continuity of care:

- dietary requirements
- food allergies
- dietary difference
- necessary medications
- emergency contact information

Childminder and parents need to communicate regularly and effectively in order to establish a good rapport so that the parents can be confident that their chosen childcare practitioner is right for them and, more importantly, for their child.

#### FOOD THAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED BY YOUNG CHILDREN

Food is one of life's greatest pleasures and yet it is also a source of worry for most parents. Although baby is able to eat a lot more kinds of food, there are still some they should not eat:



- **SALT**-from seven months to a year old , 1 g of salt a day is the maximum amount for baby should have, which they will get from their breast or formula milk feeds. Do not add any salt to foods for young babies as their kidneys can not cope with it. Baby foods are not allowed to contain salt, but such ingredients as bacon and cheese will contain some. It is best not to encourage a liking for salt at any age.
- **SUGAR**-only add sugar to food or drinks you give your baby if it is necessary. Children does not need sugar. Sugar could encourage a sweet tooth and lead to tooth decay when the first teeth start to come through.
- **HONEY**-this is a sugar and can cause the same problems as sugar. Do not give honey until your child is one year old, even for easing coughs. Very occasionally it can contain a type of bacteria which can produce toxins in the baby's intestines and can cause a very serious illness(infant botulism. After the age of one, the baby's intestine matures and the bacteria are not able to grow.
- **NUTS**- these can be a choking hazards, especially whole nuts. Nuts and nut pastes should also be avoided if family has a history of allergies. Nuts products can induce a severe allergic reaction-anaphylactic shock-which can be life threatening, so it is best to be cautious.
- **EGGS**-can be given from six months but they must be thoroughly cooked until both the white and the yolk are solid. Allergic reaction to eggs can be quite common, particularly to the egg whites. Soft boiled eggs can be given after one year.

- FISH AND SHELLFISH-are highly allergic. The amount of mercury in these foods can affect a baby's growing nervous system.

## CHILDHOOD CHRONIC DISEASES

The list of health problems that can affect a child's growth and development is huge and can range from simple colds and ear infections, which are short-lived, to much more serious problems such as cystic fibrosis, which can be life threatening.

If you are caring for a child with a particular health problem it is absolutely vital that you work with the parents to provide the best care possible for the child. You will need to glean as much information as you can about the child's condition in order to plan for their care and well-being.

Parents will be very knowledgeable about any condition that affects their child and they are the best people to ask for advice and information.

However you may also like to source further information from doctors, health visitors and the internet.

ASTHMA- is Britain's most common long-term childhood illness, according to the National Asthma Campaign.

Asthma is a particular kind of chronic allergic reaction affecting the airways, leading to inflammation, narrowed airways and characteristic symptoms which include:

- wheezing

- shortness of breath
- tightness in the chest
- coughing

These symptoms are usually variable, intermittent, often worse at night, and can be provoked by various triggers including cigarette smoke, house-dust mites, contact with animals and exercise.

All allergic reactions, including food allergy, eczema, hay-fever and the life-threatening anaphylaxis, are on the increase.

Asthma impacts not only on the child, with frequent episodes of wheezy illness which can be frightening, time off school, visit to the GP, but also on the family, leading to constant anxiety and sleepless nights.

DIABETES- is a disease affecting the pancreas. This gland produces the substance insulin, which helps the body use up the sugar which comes from the diet. If there is insufficient insulin glucose builds up in the the bloodstream and causes problems for many organs of the body. Most young diabetics will use a blood glucose measuring device at home to check the blood glucose level frequently. A child and their family will need a period of adjustment after diabetes is diagnosed. They must establish a routine for blood glucose monitoring and injecting, learn how to count carbohydrates, see diabetes health professionals regularly and cope with fluctuating blood glucose levels. New challenges may arise as a child moves through different life stages.

CYSTIC FIBROSIS-this is an inherited disease in which a number of body tissues an abnormally thick mucus. For example, the lining of the air passages in the lungs normally produces a thin mucus which keeps the lining moist. In cystic fibrosis this is very thick, leading to the air passages becoming blocked and susceptible to infection.

The condition also affected the pancreas. This gland produces digestive juices and if it is affected by cystic fibrosis food can not be digestive properly. This mean that the child's bowel movements may be loose, fatty, and foul-smelling although sometimes constipation will be a problem.

Cystic fibrosis affects approximately one child in 3. 000 in UK. A test of the amount of salt in the sweat will confirm the diagnosis. There is no cure. However if it is diagnosed early, damage to the lungs can be prevented.

CEREBRAL PALSY-results from damage to the parts of the brain which control the body's movements and posture. This damage may occur before birth, during birth or during the first two years of life.

The developing brain may be damaged by lack of oxygen, infection in the mother during pregnancy or a placenta which is not functioning properly.

Children with cerebral palsy may need ongoing treatment throughout their childhood. Parents should always be involved in the treatment programme and in most cases will be able to help with exercises at home. Some sufferers from cerebral palsy may also have a mental handicap as a result of brain damage, but equally there may be no mental handicap whatsoever.

These chronic health conditions, in addition to causing issues with child development both physically, emotionally and intellectually, can also cause great distress for those caring for the child.

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