High energy weaning diet

It has been recommended to wean your baby on a high energy diet as they need extra calories to help them gain weight. Your baby may already be on a high energy formula.

This information sheet will give you ideas on how to increase the calorie and nutritional content of your baby's food and is to supplement information on weaning that you may have already been given by your Health Visitor. It should only be used with support from your paediatric dietitian.

What is weaning?

Weaning is the introduction of solids into your baby's diet. It is recommended you wean your baby from around six months of age. If your baby was born premature your dietitian will discuss the best time to introduce solids.

How can I tell if my baby is ready to wean?

All babies are different and develop at different rates. To help you decide when your baby has developed the skills to safely start solid foods it is important to look out for physical signs which together show it's time to start weaning onto solids.

Can your baby:

1. Stay in a sitting position and hold their head steady?
2. Co-ordinate their eyes, hands and mouth and pick up food and put it in their mouth all by themselves?
3. Swallow foods – babies who are not ready will push the food back out

First tastes – practical tips

Choose a time when your baby is not tired and you and your baby are relaxed.

- Offers a few teaspoons of food, once per day. Build up to three meals per day
- Give a range of foods and textures
- Do not force feed your baby and allow them to feed themselves using fingers when they show interest
- If you are using a spoon wait for your baby to open their mouth when food is offered
- Do not add salt to foods and avoid salty foods
- Unless advised otherwise by your healthcare team, introduce common allergenic foods such as cow's milk, eggs, soya, wheat, fish, peanut butter, sesame from around 6 months age. Introduce one allergenic food at a time when your baby is well. Once tolerated, continue to offer these foods regularly as part of your baby's usual diet

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Ideas for increasing the calorie content of your baby's food

- Always choose full fat products
- If using powdered baby food make with breast milk, formula milk or full fat cows milk (from 6 months age) instead of water
- Add one teaspoon of butter/full fat margarine or avocado oil to home made puree baby meals or jars
- Use cheese sauces made with your baby's usual milk or full fat cows milk (from 6 months age) and add to pasta/potato/vegetables
- If your baby has been prescribed a high energy formula milk use this in foods such as cereals, baby rice and milk puddings
- Add cottage cheese or cream cheese to mashed potato or grated cheese to baked beans and pasta dishes
- Add ½–1 teaspoon of butter/full fat margarine/cheese/cream or oil to two tablespoons of mashed potatoes and vegetables
- Add one teaspoon butter/full fat margarine to scrambled egg
- Pudding ideas: rice pudding, fruit and custard or cream, full fat yogurt
- If giving bread or toast, spread butter/full fat margarine thickly. You can add smooth nut butters or hummus
- Snack ideas: baby fruit/oat bars, rice cakes or breadsticks with hummus, fruit bites, baby biscuits and baby puffs

General practical tips

- Try to keep meals times to 30 minutes
- Offer a main meal and pudding even if your baby only eats a small amount
- Try to offer food before fluids then your baby will not fill up on fluids
- Avoid snacks such as crisps, chocolate and biscuits. These will fill your baby up but not provide any nutrients

Calorie powders

If you have been prescribed a calorie powder your dietitian will explain to you how to use it, when to add and how much to add.

For further information please contact the Paediatric Dietitians on **0121 424 1674**.

Accessibility

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