



## TOP TIPS *for* HOMEMADE BABY FOOD



### Your baby has reached an important milestone: she's ready for solid food!

Making baby food at home can be an excellent way to give your baby healthy, nutritious foods while maximizing your time and resources. Here are our top tips to get you started.

#### TRY FRUITS AND VEGGIES FIRST

Avocados, bananas, green peas, sweet potato and butternut squash all make good choices for baby's first tastes. They mash and puree smoothly, have mild or sweet flavors, and are packed full of vitamins. Add stronger flavors and different textures as your baby advances. Talk to your pediatrician about foods that are best to avoid.

#### CHOOSE ORGANIC

Make baby food from USDA-certified organic foods to protect your child's developing body from the harmful effects of pesticides. Take special care with fruits and vegetables on EWG's Dirty Dozen list. These foods have shown the highest levels of pesticide residues in government tests.

#### NO FANCY EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

Retailers offer an array of tools and equipment specially designed for making baby food. You don't need them. Some foods, like bananas, smash easily with a fork. For others, your home blender, food processor or immersion blender will do the trick. Just remember to take extra care cleaning, so bacteria don't sneak into baby's food.

#### AVOID RICE CEREAL

Infant rice cereal contains alarming amounts of arsenic, a known cause of cancer. For healthier cereals, try whole grains or oats, which can be blended to a finer texture and cooked in water for easy eating. You can also mix baby's food with breast milk or formula to thin the consistency.

#### PREPARE IN BULK, THEN FREEZE

Save time, money and effort by preparing large amounts of baby's new food and freezing it small, individual portions – silicone ice cube trays work well for this. Cooked foods like carrots or baked apples work best; don't freeze raw foods like banana or avocado. Simply defrost portions as needed – don't microwave – and always discard food your baby doesn't finish.

#### WATCH OUT FOR ALLERGIES

To be safe, introduce one new food at a time to see how your baby reacts and wait four days before trying the next food. Look for signs of troubled breathing, swelling, sneezing, rashes or hives, which may indicate an allergic reaction. Contact your pediatrician if your baby shows these or other symptoms that are out of the ordinary.

#### IS BABY READY FOR SOLID FOOD?

Most babies are ready to try solid foods between four and six months of age. First foods introduce them to exciting new tastes and textures, preparing them for a lifetime of healthy eating. But until six months, breast milk or formula should remain their primary source of nutrition. Once they start on solid food, expect new eaters to consume one to two tablespoons at a time. Always talk to your pediatrician before introducing solids.

#### STORE SAFELY AND CLEAN THOROUGHLY

Store your baby's food in glass containers. If you use plastic, choose BPA-free. Your baby's developing immune system is vulnerable to bacteria and contaminants, so wash your hands and kitchen surfaces while preparing food and clean food containers thoroughly. Use EWG's Guide to Healthy Cleaning to find safer cleaning products.



Helping parents and caregivers make informed decisions to protect the health and development of our most precious resource—our children.  
[healthychild.org](http://healthychild.org)