

# Baby Friendly Meals



SMOOTH  
TEXTURE



LUMPY  
TEXTURE



FINGER  
FOOD

Easy tips for serving **iron-rich** food from family meals.



# Introducing...

Solid foods to your baby is recommended from around six months of age.

Foods can be introduced in any order and at any rate as long as they are rich in iron, nutritious and the texture is suitable for your baby's stage of development.

The meal ideas and practical tips in this brochure explains how to prepare different food textures from the family meal, including

**Smooth, Lumpy & Finger Foods.**

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# Iron-Rich Red Meat for Babies

Iron-rich foods are recommended from 6-months of age to prevent iron deficiency.

- The best food sources contain haem iron that is easily absorbed by the body
- Haem iron is found in meat, fish and poultry
- Red meat is an excellent source of haem iron
- Serving lean red meat three to four times a week is an easy way to provide your baby with enough iron



# Tips for Baby-Friendly Meals

## Which foods?

Baby's taste buds are quite sensitive - use these tips to serve baby from the family meal.

- Add more intense spices and herbs such as chilli to your meal once your baby's portion has been served
- Avoid adding salt to baby's meal so they learn to enjoy the natural flavours of different foods
- Use as little sugar as possible in cooking and avoid adding sugar and honey to your baby's meals
- Avoid raw egg and honey before 12 months of age due to risk of bacteria

## How much food does my baby need?

Children have a natural ability to adjust the amount they eat according to their needs and growth patterns.

Every child is different; some days they will eat more than other days.

Continue to consistently offer small portions of nutritious foods from the family meal and trust your child to decide how much to eat at each meal and over the day.

# How-to Food Textures for Baby

This information provides a guide to preparing different food textures. Increasing food texture is important for your baby to learn how to chew and enjoy a variety of nutrition foods.

Ages indicated are provided as a guide. Babies can vary in the time needed to progress through each stage. Depending on the type of food and your baby's development, you can go straight to the lumpy or finger food stage.

## Safe Eating Tips

- Avoid small, hard round foods such as whole nuts and uncooked vegetables (e.g., raw carrot sticks) due to risk of choking until after 3-years of age
- Sit with your baby while eating to avoid choking accidents

## Smooth Texture (Around 6-months of age)

- Blended or finely mashed
- Nutritious foods can be introduced in any order and any rate.
- First foods can be lumpy or soft pieces of food, depending on your preference.



## Lumpy Texture (Around 7-months of age)

- Coarsely mashed and soft pieces of food to encourage chewing, important for speech development and eating a variety of nutritious foods.
- It is normal for babies to gag (but not choke) on lumpy foods when they are learning to chew.

## Finger Foods (Around 8-months of age)

- Soft finger foods to encourage self-feeding.
- A variety of cut up, soft foods from family meal.



# Versatile Meatballs



### Two ways to serve meatballs:

Serve with pasta and a tomato sauce or use leftover meatballs to make a share plate with vegetables, pita bread and hummus.

### Recipe Tips

**Tomato sauce:** Add finely diced onion, celery, carrots, zucchini and quartered button mushrooms to canned diced tomatoes

**Salad vegetables:** Cherry tomatoes cut in half, slices of avocado, peeled and diced cucumber, coarsely grated carrot

**Meatballs:** 500g lean beef (raw weight) serves 4 adult meals

# How-to Textures

## Smooth Texture

Blend chopped meatballs, vegetables and sauce until smooth puree.



## Lumpy Texture

Dice up meatballs and vegetables and coat in pasta sauce.



## Finger Food

3 meatballs, pasta and sauce, steamed vegetables (zucchini and carrot).



# Steak with 3+ Vegetables



### Two ways to serve steak & vegetables:

Serve with BBQed vegetables for a one-pot meal or slice cooked steak and serve on stir-fried vegetables. Alternatively, serve cooked, sliced steak in a bowl with rice, cooked vegetables and shredded salad leaves

### Recipe Tips

**Grilled vegetables:** Barbecue peeled eggplant, capsicum, ribbons of zucchini, asparagus and sweet potato

**Stir fried vegetables:** Florets of broccoli and cauliflower, sliced snow peas or green beans, shredded cabbage or kale

**Steak:** 400 - 600g trimmed beef rump steak, 2 sirloin steaks or 4 small lamb leg steaks (raw weight) serves 4 adult meals

# How-to Textures

## Smooth Texture

Blend 2-3 slices of steak with 1- 2 tbsp of cooked vegetables, add 1-2 tbs boiling water if necessary and blend until smooth.



## Lumpy Texture

Pulse blend 2-3 slices of steak with spinach leaves until lumpy and mix with fork mashed or finely chopped vegetables.

## Finger Food

Slice steak into finger-sized small cubes. Serve with cubed cooked vegetables and cooked rice or pasta.



# One Pot Meals



### Three ways to serve one pot meals:

Slow-cooked meals are an easy way to prepare tender, moist meat and vegetables for your baby. Use different herbs, spices and vegetables for a world of flavours. For example, Italian ragout, mild Asian curry or Hungarian goulash.

#### Recipe Tips

**Vegetables:** Start with diced onions, carrots and celery; then add mushrooms and finally spinach leaves or peas.

**Meat:** 600g Chuck, Gravy or blade beef or diced Lamb, trimmed of fat and cubed (raw weight) serves 4 adult meals

# How-to Textures

## Smooth Texture

Blend 1/4 cup of meat, vegetables and juices from the cooked meal with 1/4 cup of the cooked rice, pasta or mashed potato until smooth.



## Lumpy Texture

Pulse 1/3 cup of the meat, vegetable and juices from the cooked meal with 1/3 cup of the cooked rice, pasta or mashed potato in blender until lumpy or mash with a fork.

## Finger Food

Put 1/2 cup of meat and vegetables from the cooked meal on a plate. Serve with 1-2 tbs of pasta, rice or mashed potato.





# Pulled Meat & Roast Veg



### Ways to serve pulled meat & roast vegetables:

Pot roast is a wet cooking method for preparing most, tender pulled meat and roast vegetables. Leftovers provide handy ingredients for preparing quick, easy meals such as salads, share plates, bowls, soup, cottage pie or fried rice.

### Recipe Tips

**Vegetables:** Pumpkin and beetroot, sliced; cauliflower florets, brussels sprouts, sliced; sweet potato wedges. Roast extra vegetables when cooking meat for leftover meals

**Meat:** Beef Blade Roast, Lamb leg (for smaller amounts buy half leg)

# How-to Textures

## Smooth Texture

Blend a small handful of roast meat and a piece of roast vegetables with 1 tbsp boiled water until smooth.



## Lumpy Texture

Finely chop shredded meat and mash with roast vegetables.

## Finger Food

Cut roast meat into small cubes and roast vegetables into finger-sized pieces.



# Storing and Re-heating Tips



## Fridge

- Cover, cool and refrigerate cooked meat immediately
- Keep no more than 2 days in small, airtight container

## Freezer

- Always add moisture to sliced, cooked meat when freezing e.g. boiled water, meat juices, mashed vegetables or casserole juices
- Once food is cooked, freeze immediately in small portions in airtight containers. Use within 4 weeks
- For small portions freeze in ice-cube trays and place in airtight freezer bags
- Thaw cubes in fridge as required
- Never re-freeze meals that have been initially frozen then thawed
- You might find it more practical to cook a batch of meat and freeze small portions

## Reheating

- Re-heat thawed or refrigerated meat meals in a small amount of water in a small pan or microwave proof dish in the microwave
- Make sure the meat and juices boil for a few minutes to ensure the food is thoroughly heated through (heat to at least 70°C)
- Mix well and check temperature of the food before giving to your baby





# Healthy Meals

This practical resource is published by  
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Information in this brochure is aimed at healthy individuals without special dietary requirements and intended as general information only. Care is taken to ensure accuracy and currency of the information, however we cannot guarantee accuracy or currency. This information does not constitute medical, dietary or nutrition advice and you should consult a health professional before making any decisions concerning your health or nutrition requirements.