

Making Baby Food

Making baby food is a simple and healthy way to feed your baby. Baby can enjoy many of the same healthy foods your family's eating. Offer a variety of foods from [Canada's Food Guide](#) and change the texture as baby grows and learns how to eat.

Vegetables and Fruit

Fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables and fruit are all good options for baby.

Choose frozen or canned vegetables or fruit without added salt, sugar, or sugar substitutes (like aspartame, stevia, or sucralose).

Many vegetables and fruit need to be cooked to soften. However, soft, ripe fruits such as bananas, melon, and avocado don't need to be cooked. These foods can be mashed or cut up and offered as a finger food.



Grain Products

Most store-bought baby cereal has iron added to help your baby grow and develop. Homemade baby cereal isn't recommended because it doesn't contain enough iron to meet baby's needs.



Once your baby's eating finger foods, you can help her get enough iron by adding baby cereal with iron to recipes.

Tip: Use baby cereal with iron to replace half of the flour in recipes for pancakes, muffins, and loaves.

For example, if the recipe calls for 1 cup (250 mL) of flour, use ½ cup (125 mL) of flour, and ½ cup (125 mL) of baby cereal with iron.

Baby can also try other grain products such as rice, couscous, unsweetened breakfast cereals, small pieces of bannock, pancakes, pasta, roti, and toast.

Milk and Alternatives

Grate or cut up hard cheese to make it into a finger food.

Offer plain yogurt (2.5% milk fat or higher) by itself, or with fruit.

You can use milk when cooking or baking, but wait until your baby is 9–12 months old before offering 3.25% (homogenized) milk as a drink.

Meat and Alternatives

Baby can try meat such as beef, bison, chicken, fish without bones, goat, lamb, pork, turkey, and wild game.



Use moist cooking methods, such as boiling, poaching, or steaming. This makes meat easier to chop, mince, or puree. Dry cooking methods, such as baking, broiling, or grilling make it harder to change the texture.

Cook meat to well done. Use a meat thermometer to make sure. To learn more, visit www.healthycanadians.gc.ca and search *cooking temperatures*.



Baby can try meat alternatives such as eggs, legumes, and tofu.

Scramble or hard-boil eggs. Cook eggs until yolks are firm. To serve hard-boiled eggs, peel shell and cut up or mash with a fork.

Offer legumes such as black beans, chick peas, kidney beans, and lentils.



Choose canned legumes with no salt added. Canned legumes are already cooked. They need to be drained and rinsed under water. Dried legumes need to be cooked.

Cooked legumes can be pureed with a blender, mashed with a fork, or given as a finger food.

Steps for making baby food

Step 1: Wash hands, cooking surfaces, and equipment

- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water before making food.
- Clean all surfaces and equipment with hot, soapy water.



Step 2: Clean and cut food

- Wash, peel, and trim food as needed. Remove bones, skin, pits, and seeds.
- Cut food into small pieces to help it cook faster.



Step 3: Cook (if needed)

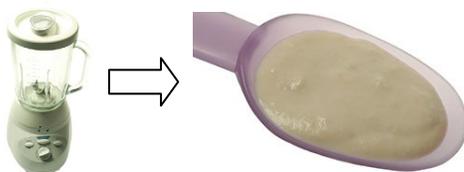
- Boil, steam, or microwave foods with water to keep foods moist.
- Skip this step for soft vegetables and fruit, and foods that are already cooked.



Step 4: Change the food's texture based on baby's needs

Pureed or smooth

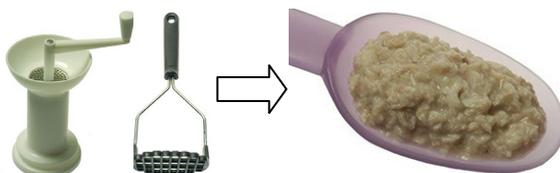
Use a blender, food processor, or hand mixer.



- Add liquid (cooking liquid or water) to help puree the food.
- Use more liquid for a smoother, thinner texture.
- Use less liquid for a thicker texture.

Lumpy or minced

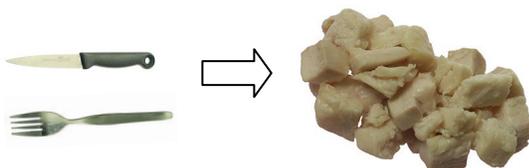
Use a potato masher, fork, food grinder, or grater.



- Add liquid if food is dry.
- Cooked ground meat is an example of a minced texture.

Cut up

Use a knife and a fork to cut into pieces.



- Start with small pieces.
- Cooked foods should be soft. If you can squish the food with your fingers, then it's soft enough for baby to chew.

Step 5: Serve

- Always check the temperature of food before feeding baby. It should be lukewarm, not hot.
- Offer baby a small portion of food from his own bowl or plate.
- Let baby choose how much to eat.

Seasoning baby's food

- Start with plain foods so baby can try the taste of the food on its own.
- Once baby has tasted the food plain, you can gradually add spices and herbs you use when cooking for the rest of the family.
- Examples of spices and herbs to try in baby's food include basil, rosemary, garlic, dill, masala, lemon zest, ginger, and cinnamon.
- Don't add salt or sugar to baby's food. Remove baby's portion first, if you plan to add salt or sugar when cooking for your family.



Creative baby food pairings

Offer new food combinations to add variety to baby's diet and help him try different tastes and textures. Pair a new food with a food your baby already likes. This may help your baby try the new food.

Try serving these foods together:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|--------------|
| baby cereal with iron | + | berries |
| beef | + | green beans |
| black beans | + | avocado |
| chicken | + | broccoli |
| chickpeas | + | sweet potato |
| pasta | + | tomato sauce |
| pork | + | apple |
| silken tofu | + | mango |



Making food safe for baby

Some germs in food can make baby sick. Follow the tips below to keep food safe.

Storing food for later

- Once it's prepared, don't leave baby food at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- Keep baby food in the fridge for up to 2 days.
- You can freeze baby food in small portions. Write the date on the package and use within 1 month.



Don't store leftover food from baby's dish. Throw it out after baby's done eating.

Reheating food

- Only reheat the amount of food you need for one meal.
- Reheat baby food on the stove or in the microwave until steaming hot. Let the food cool to lukewarm before feeding baby.
- **Be careful when heating in the microwave**, as there are hot and cold spots. Stir and rotate the food often for even heating.

For food safety information:

- www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/index-eng.php and click on *Food safety*, then *Food safety information for children 5 years and under*.
- www.befoodsafe.ca

For information about feeding baby:

- www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca
- www.ahs.ca and search *Starting Solid Foods*.