

Finger Foods for Babies 6 -12 months

Why offer your 6-12 month old finger foods?

Finger foods are small pieces of food that your baby can pick up and eat easily. Eating finger foods helps your child to learn how to bite and chew and to use her fingers and hands to feed herself. Eating finger foods also improves your child's coordination and helps her to get used to different food textures. This resource will give you ideas for finger foods and show you how you can help your child progress from mashed foods to finger foods.



Steps you can take

When your child is comfortable eating infant cereal and soft, lumpy, mashed foods from a spoon, he may be ready to try finger foods.

- Watch for signs that your baby is ready to try finger foods. Signs include grabbing the spoon while you're feeding him, interest in what you're eating, and trying to take food from your plate. Other developmental signs that your baby is ready for finger foods are that he can sit up in a high chair by himself, and is learning to crawl.
- Babies are often ready to try finger foods sometime in the 6-10 month period, but there's no set time that all babies are ready. By about age 1 year, most babies will be able to eat many of the family foods served at mealtimes.
- Start with soft, cut up foods. At first your baby might just scoop up the food in her fist, but she will soon learn to pick up pieces using her thumb and forefinger.
- Fruits should be peeled and cut into small pieces with the pits removed. Cook vegetables until they are soft or grate hard raw vegetables.
- Babies can enjoy soft finger foods before they have teeth. They can gum foods into smaller pieces.

- Offer a variety of foods from the four food groups from "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide"
www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide.

Grains

Cooked pasta - macaroni, rotini, penne, pieces of rice cakes, oat ring cereal like Cheerios®, Melba toast, pieces of roti or tortilla, Bran flakes, strips of bread or toast with the crust removed - dry or with butter or margarine.

Vegetables and Fruits

Pieces of fruit without peel or skin, soft cooked vegetables: Avocado; banana; peach; pear; kiwi; watermelon; or grapes, quartered.
Cooked broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, yam, or squash.

Milk & Dairy

Cheese slices, small cubes or strips of pasteurized cheese (after 9 months).

Meat & Alternate (well cooked)

Tofu, ground meat or chicken, small (pea sized pieces of tender meat or chicken, fish (de-boned and flaked), quartered meatball, egg, small beans (black beans, navy beans) or larger beans cut in half (kidney beans).

Other Tips

Sit down with your child while he eats, and whenever possible, eat with him. Never leave your child by himself while he is eating.

- Sit your child in a high chair to eat.

- Hard and sticky foods can cause choking and should be avoided. Some of these foods are nuts, seeds, globs of nut or seed butters, raisins, popcorn, ice cubes, chips, gum, marshmallows, hard candies or jellybeans. Cut round foods like carrots, grapes and hot dogs in 4 pieces lengthwise and then into small pieces.
- Don't use hard foods (like raw vegetable sticks) for teething. Your baby can break off a piece and choke.



Notes

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