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Nutrition in the first year of life

Guidance for transitioning from pure milk feeds to family meals

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Based on the scientific foundations of the German recommendations "Ernährung und Bewegung von Säuglingen und stillenden Frauen" (Nutrition and physical exercise for infants and breastfeeding women) published by the "Gesund ins Leben" network

Content

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Introduction

Dear parents,
Dear caregivers,

The first years of a child's life can affect their health for a lifetime. From the start of a pregnancy until the age of 4, crucial foundations are laid for the development of an individual's health.

This illustrated brochure shows a baby's transition from milk feeds to solid food eaten with the family.

It focuses in particular on introducing various foods and on serving sizes for food and drink during the first year of a child's life.

Pages 4 to 8 each show an example of a 24-hour period – from morning (sun symbol) until night-time (moon symbol). The thumbnail photos represent the relevant meals over the course of the day, the sequence of which can be adjusted individually.

We would like to thank the Bavarian State Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry for the photographs provided.

Together with its national partners, the Health Promotion Switzerland foundation has set up the Miapas project ([German](#), [French](#), [Italian](#)) to promote infant health. To this end, a standard set of basic principles and messages has been developed for professionals working with babies and young children. In addition, Miapas raises awareness among policymakers of the importance of health promotion in early childhood.

The Health Promotion Switzerland foundation is supported by the cantons and the insurance providers. It has a statutory mandate to initiate, coordinate and evaluate health promotion measures (Health Insurance Act, Art. 19). The foundation is accountable to the Confederation. It has offices in Bern and Lausanne, and its supreme decision-making body is the Foundation Council. Every person in Switzerland makes an annual contribution of CHF 4.80 to Health Promotion Switzerland; this money is collected by the health insurance providers. Further information: [German](#), [French](#), [Italian](#)

From birth

In the first 4 to 6 months: Breast milk or infant formula only. Frequency as needed (8–12 times over 24 hours).



Alternative: Ready-made infant formula



No earlier than the beginning of the 5th month, no later than the beginning of the 7th month

Puréed food should be introduced at 17 weeks at the earliest and at 26 weeks at the latest. To enable your baby to get used to the new food, a few spoonfuls of purée are sufficient to start with. Your baby should then be breastfed or given infant formula to fill them up.

To start with: A few spoonfuls of puréed carrots each day, followed by breastfeeding.

A few days later: A purée of carrots, potatoes and rapeseed oil each day, followed by breastfeeding.

Another few days later: **A vegetable, potato and meat purée** each day: 2 carrots + 1 potato + 10g lean meat + 1–2 teaspoons rapeseed oil + 1½ tablespoons orange juice



To prepare: Peel the vegetables and potatoes. Wash the meat. Finely dice all ingredients and cook thoroughly in a little unsalted water. Add the juice. Purée until smooth. Stir in rapeseed oil.

Alternative: Ready-made purées with no salt (first vegetable purée, followed by vegetable and potato purée, and then vegetable, potato and meat purée)



About one month later

From the beginning of the 6th month at the earliest and the beginning of the 8th month at the latest, the second type of purée can be introduced: for instance, a fruit purée with or without cereal.

Fruit purée with or without cereal

Fruit + if desired 2 tablespoons unsweetened instant cereal for infants (e.g. millet, wheat, spelt, oats) + a little water (if the consistency is too thick)



Alternative: Ready-made fruit purée with or without cereal



Another month later

Between the ages of 7 and 9 months, the third type of purée can be introduced: for instance, milk and cereal porridge.

Milk and cereal porridge

200ml infant formula or breast milk or a mixture of whole milk and water + 2 tablespoons unsweetened instant cereal + fruit



Alternative: Ready-made, unsweetened milk and cereal porridge



Drink: Water*

* Tap water in Switzerland is safe. It tastes good and is perfectly hygienic.



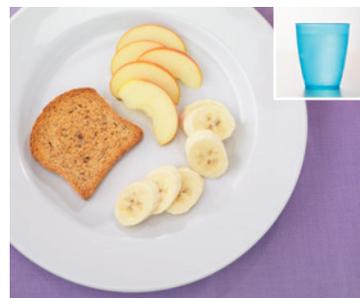
From the 10th to the 12th month of age

Towards the end of your baby's first year of life, they will start to transition from baby food to normal family food.

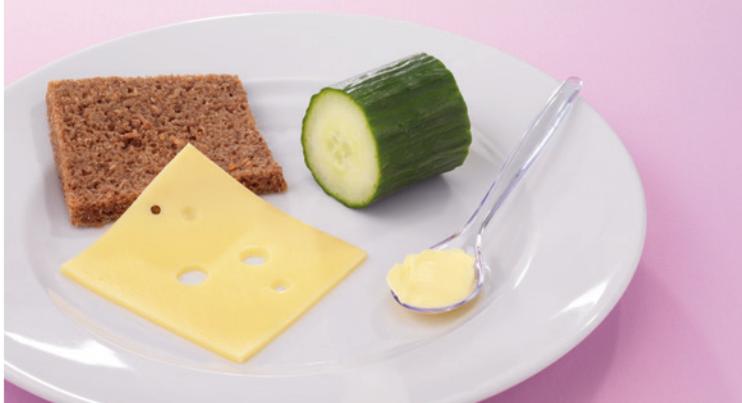
Finely milled oatmeal (cooked) + fruit + milk



Wholemeal spaghetti + tomato + carrot + minced meat (20–30g) + 1 tablespoon rapeseed oil



1 slice of wholemeal bread + dairy product* + cucumber + small amount of butter or margarine



* Breast milk or infant formula; from the 13th month on, whole milk, quark or cheese are also possible

From milk feeds to family meals

Breastfeeding

During the first 4 to 6 months of your baby's life, they only need milk and nothing else. Ideally, you breast-feed your baby, because breast milk and breastfeeding itself have many benefits for both child and mother. If you are not breastfeeding, you should use manufactured infant formula. This is a milk powder especially for babies.

Give your baby the breast or a bottle whenever they need it (i.e. not at fixed times). In the first weeks following birth, your baby may need to feed 8 to 12 times within a 24-hour period. With time, your baby will need to feed less often and will settle into a regular feeding pattern.

Even after the introduction of complementary foods, it is advisable to keep breastfeeding. Breastfeeding can continue for as long as mother and child want it to.

Complementary food

At 17 weeks at the earliest and at 26 weeks at the latest, you should start introducing complementary foods. The exact time at which you start will depend on your baby's development. Observe your child: can they sit upright and hold their head up with a little assistance? Are they showing interest in other people's food or putting things in their mouth? If so, you can start introducing your baby to the first type of purée.

This first purée is best made from a single type of food (e.g. carrot). Initially, your baby will eat only a few spoonfuls. At this stage, they do not need to fully satisfy their hunger with purée. You can offer your child the breast or a bottle afterwards to fill them up. Increase the amount of purée offered each day. After a few days, you can add some cooked and finely puréed potatoes and rapeseed oil to the pure vegetable purée. After a few more days, you can add a small amount of cooked and puréed meat, fish or egg to the purée (the amount can be increased with time). Add a little fruit juice (100% juice with no add-

ed sugar) to the purée. About one month after the first type of purée has been introduced, you can start giving your child the second type of purée, and after another month, the third.

From this point onwards, your child will need about 200ml of additional fluid a day. You should give your child only unsweetened drinks, ideally non-carbonated mineral water or tap water. Tap water in Switzerland tastes good and is perfectly hygienic. For variety, you can also offer your child unsweetened herbal or fruit tea.

Between the 9th and the 11th month, your child should eat complementary food 3 to 4 times a day. You can also continue to breastfeed or give infant formula. At this age, it is no longer necessary to purée foods quite so finely. Often, it is sufficient to coarsely mash the food. You can also increasingly offer finger food, e.g. bread crusts, slices of soft fruit (such as pear or peach), cooked apple slices and cooked vegetables, cut into pieces for little hands to hold, encouraging them to eat, discover and experiment.

Transitioning to family meals

Towards the end of your baby's first year of life (10–12 months), they will start to transition from baby food to normal family food. Gradually, your child will no longer require specially prepared meals, and they will be able to eat almost everything the grown-ups are eating. We recommend that your child get three main meals a day (breakfast, lunch, dinner) and, depending on how hungry they are, two small snacks in the morning and afternoon. Water is recommended as a drink at each meal.

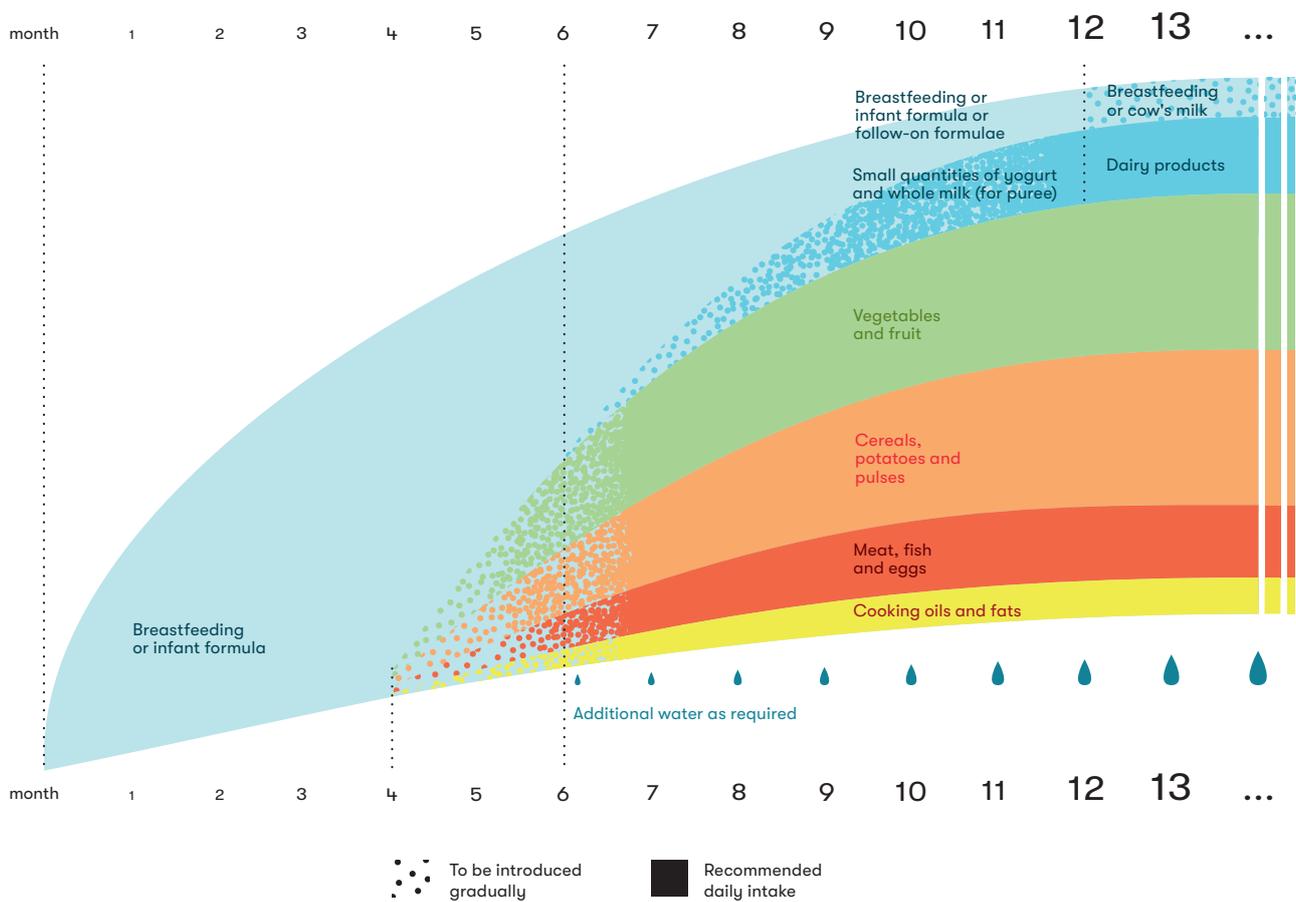
Quantities

How much a child eats may vary widely. On some days they may eat a lot, and on other days very little. There are also great differences from one child to the next. If, after a few spoonfuls, your child turns their head away, closes their mouth or pushes the food out of their mouth, then they are probably full. Never force your child to eat up.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is important for strong bones and teeth. Give your child vitamin D every day in the form of drops. A specialist (e.g. a counsellor for mothers and fathers, a pharmacist or a paediatrician) can advise you on the proper dosage.

Introducing Foods to Infants



Additional information

- “Nutrition for babies and young children” brochure ([German](#), [French](#), [Italian](#)) published by the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office FSVO
- Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office FSVO flyer “[Feeding infants](#)”
- FSVO link to nutrition for babies and young children ([German](#), [French](#), [Italian](#))
- “[Breastfeeding](#)” booklet published by Breastfeeding Promotion Switzerland
- Information leaflets published by the Swiss Society for Nutrition SGE ([German](#), [French](#), [Italian](#))
- [Tips for balanced mid-morning and afternoon snacks](#)
- Offerings for children and parents recommended by Health Promotion Switzerland ([German](#), [French](#), [Italian](#))

Personal information and counselling

- Counselling for mothers and fathers ([German](#), [French](#), [Italian](#))
- Addresses of midwives ([German](#), [French](#))
- Addresses of lactation consultants ([German](#), [French](#))
- Addresses of nutritionists ([German](#), [French](#))
- [Information about allergies and food intolerances](#)

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