

FoodMatters

A nutrition newsletter for carers of children under five

ISSUE 15

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"Feeding your baby" insert included to copy and distribute.

Winter 2004



Feeding babies

Angela Hockley, Dietitian/Nutritionist, APD
Women's & Children's Hospital

Breastfeeding is the normal way to feed a baby, and is all the nutrition they need until around 6 months of age.

This is the major message that has been given to help guide parents on how to feed their baby in the first year of life. Last year the Government launched the new Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents, which contained information on feeding babies and introducing solids, as well as the Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers.

The Infant Feeding Guidelines provide accurate and up to date information to workers involved in helping parents care for the health of their babies. They contain information on encouraging and supporting breastfeeding, what to feed when a baby is not receiving breastmilk, starting solids, and providing the best food for children in the first year and beyond.

As nutritionists and childcare workers we understand how important it is to give children the right foods, so they have the energy and nutrients to grow and be healthy. Encouraging healthy eating habits in infants and children is vital, and we can help by giving parents the support they need. This begins with supporting breastfeeding in our community.

Welcome

to issue 15 of Food Matters. In this edition we focus on infant feeding and show you how to give children the best start in life by providing safe and nutritious foods. We discuss the importance of exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months of age and when to start introducing solids to children. We also look at the importance of offering foods of the right texture and when to move on to lumpier, chewy foods to ensure children continue to develop appropriately.

Read about the launch of the new Healthy Food Choices in Family Day Care Policy, try some of our delicious recipes for 9-12 month olds and find out how your centre can receive the Start Right Eat Right award. Also included in this issue of Food Matters is the Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers. It is a summary of the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia, released in August 2003. Everything you need to know about breastfeeding, infant formula, introducing solids and more is included in this brochure.

We hope you enjoy reading this winter edition of Food Matters.

Claire Flanagan
Editor and Nutritionist
Women's and Children's Hospital

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Breast is best!

Breastfeeding is the normal way to feed babies, and 'exclusive breastfeeding' to around 6 months of age is known to give babies the best start. 'Exclusive breastfeeding' means a baby only receives breastmilk, and no other liquids or solids, other than medicines if they are needed. Exclusive breastfeeding until around 6 months of age has been shown to protect babies against many infections, and prevent allergies and some diseases. If babies can not have breastmilk, it is important that they receive an infant formula, and that it is made up in a clean environment and according to directions.



Introducing solids

From around 6 months of age babies are ready to start having solid foods. Around this time they are developmentally ready to start eating. They can hold their head up and sit with support, they are able to control their tongues, they are interested in what others eat (looking, reaching and grabbing for food), and they seem to want more food, even after a full breastfeed. From this time a baby's need for some nutrients like protein and iron increases, and introducing solid foods, while continuing breastfeeding, helps to meet these needs.

Starting solid foods too early is not good for a baby. Before four months of age a baby's swallowing skills may not be developed

enough to eat safely, and their digestive systems are not ready to deal with solid foods. On the other hand, it is also important not to leave starting solids too late. By introducing solids at around 6 months, choosing safe and nutritious foods, and continuing to breastfeed, babies get the best nutrition to promote their growth and development.

Safe and nutritious solid foods for babies means providing the right types of food, making sure they are nutritious and a safe texture, and that foods are prepared in a clean environment and stored safely.

The importance of iron

The right type of foods for babies depends on their age. Usually in Australia one of the first foods introduced is baby rice cereal with added iron. This is easily digested and can be made up to the texture a baby can manage. Fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry and fish are soon added to the diet. These foods are high in nutrients and should be offered pureed to a soft and smooth texture. Foods high in iron like baby rice cereal and meats are particularly important first foods, because at around 6 months baby's iron stores are running out, and breastmilk or formula alone no longer provide enough iron to meet their needs.

Foods should be introduced individually, and once they have become familiar, the variety of foods offered should be changed regularly. Custards, yoghurts and other cereals, mixed with expressed breastmilk or a small amount of cow's milk, can be introduced next for added nutrients and variety. Babies quickly learn to eat foods of different textures, so mashed or minced foods should be offered to encourage babies to chew.

When to introduce cow's milk

As new foods are introduced it is important to remember that even though your baby has started solids, breastmilk (or formula if the mother is not breastfeeding) still plays a vital role in their nutrition. While a small amount of cow's milk can be included in foods, cow's milk still should *not* be the main drink before 12 months of age, as it is lower in nutrients and harder to digest than breastmilk or infant formula.

By around 12-15 months children can usually manage modified versions of the family's meal. Once eating family meals, breastfeeding should still be encouraged to continue for as long as both mother and baby desire. However, from 12 months of age full cream cow's milk can be used as a child's main milk drink.

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Food sources of iron

There are two different types of iron in food: one from animal products and the other from plant foods. The iron in animal products is more easily absorbed by the body than the iron in plant foods. The best sources of iron from animal products are red meats such as beef and lamb. Other meats such as pork, poultry and fish are also good sources.

Child care centres play an important role in helping children meet their iron requirements. For more information on iron and children and some tips on achieving an iron-rich menu, check out Issue 7 of Food Matters: "Iron for children under 5", by logging onto our website at www.chdf.org.au/childcarenutrition.

Making the move to lumps and bumps

By Emma Donaghey, Dietitian Inner Southern Community Health Service (ISCHS) with the kind assistance of Naomi Fahey, Occupational Therapist ISCHS and Martine Ledger, Speech Pathologist ISCHS and WCH Speech Pathology.

At birth the sensations of a baby's mouth are more highly developed than in any other part of the body. Babies first play involves exploring with their mouths and is a key part of their development. In the first 4 to 5 months of life, babies will suck or mouth their fingers, their parents' fingers, blankets, toys or clothing. These sensations of softness, firmness and hardness, help babies to get to know the sensations they will come across as they move from the nipple to a spoon or a cup.

Starting on pureed food at around six months of age is a key step for young babies. Moving from mashed to lumpy foods is advised at about 7 months of age. This involves early chewing to break down more solid foods and to separate lumps. This time is vital. If a baby does not practise eating foods that need chewing at around this age they may have trouble moving on from pureed foods to lumpy foods.

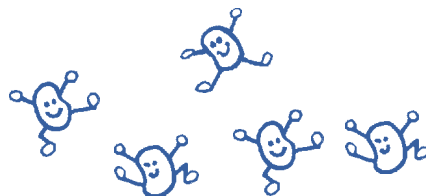
Many of the muscles a baby uses for eating and drinking are also used for making sounds and talking. Children having trouble with eating can also have problems learning to talk.

Babies learn to chew more advanced foods by mouthing toys. Make sure babies have many types of textures that they can safely suck and chew on (eg, bibs, cloth toys, rubber toys, teething rings or toothbrushes). Children are more confident when they have some control of this new experience so let them hold the toy as well.



The new *Infant Feeding Guidelines* do not advise using a dummy as it can affect breastfeeding. It is recommended that if a dummy is used it should only be used after one to two months of age and only used sometimes.

For more information or ideas please contact your local Occupational Therapist, Dietitian/ Nutritionist or Speech Pathologist.



For more information

For enquiries about any aspect of Food Matters, including mailing list details phone (08) 8161 7777. For general information about children's health and nutrition, contact the Women's & Children's Hospital Health Information Centre, phone (08) 8161 6875.

Claire Flanagan
Editor, Food Matters

Healthy food tastes good

By Mariana Stokoe, Family Day Care, Department of Education and Community Services (DECS)



The Westside, Metro South West and Multicultural schemes officially launched the new Healthy Food Choices in Family Day Care Policy this summer with a fun day at the Bushy Magic Playground in North Adelaide. With lots of lovely healthy food to share, fun activities for the children, an opportunity for care providers, staff and Noarlunga Health Services to get together and enjoy the glorious sunny November day, it was an all round success!

Operations Coordinator, Janne Doman endorsed the new policy as a very positive and consultative response to an existing need within Family Day Care. She introduced Project Officer, Calli Strongylos, who spoke about the development of the policy and its importance for our grown-ups of tomorrow.

Colourful resources have been distributed to all Family Day Care families, including information on Family Day Care Guidelines for Food Provision, tips on healthy lunch box ideas, safe eating and ways to manage food refusal and fussy eaters.

What's Happening?

Compiled by Jane Taylor, Centre for Health Promotion, Women's and Children's Hospital



Start Right Eat Right is now available to all Childcare Centres in South Australia

The Start Right Eat Right award recognises childcare centres that have:

- a nutritionally adequate menu
- all staff trained in food safety
- a supportive and enjoyable eating environment for children

To receive the Start Right Eat Right award the Director and Cook attend a one and a half-day accredited nutrition course and submit a menu assessment exercise. As part of the course they revise the centre menu and nutrition policy and have a site visit by the Start Right Eat Right Dietitian or a local Nutritionist. In addition all staff at the centre take part in food safety training. To achieve the award, the local Environmental Health Officer carries out a food safety inspection audit.

A limited number of training sessions, in rural and metropolitan locations, are being held throughout 2004, so book early to ensure a place.

For more information or to book a training session phone the Start Right Eat Right Project on 8325 8100.

Changes to Workplace Assessment for Childcare Cooks

For childcare cooks wishing to obtain a qualification in Community Food Services, Regency TAFE now offers workplace assessment as two options.

- Option A assesses 50% of the Certificate II.
- Option B assesses 100% of the Certificate II.

Workplace assessment recognises the skills and knowledge cooks have gained as part of their job and from previous training, eg fire safety training.

Costs for both options have been reduced! A qualification can now be obtained for half the price of full time study.

For more information, contact Sandra Andreassen at the Elizabeth campus of Regency TAFE on 8207 9763.

You may wish to celebrate or highlight these upcoming events in your centre.

- **NAIDOC (National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee) Week July 4-11, 2004.**

This week is an annual event that celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture. More information about NAIDOC Week can be found at www.atsic.gov.au/events/NAIDOC/default.asp



- **National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day, August 4, 2004.**

This is an annual event highlighting the importance of children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society. Look at Issue #13 (Indigenous Inclusion) of Food Matters for some ideas you can use in your centre.

- **International Day of the World's Indigenous People, August 9, 2004.** This event celebrates the achievements and contributions of Indigenous people to the global community. Look at Issue #13 (Indigenous Inclusion) of Food Matters for some ideas you can use in your centre.



- **Child Protection Week September 5-11, 2004**

During this week the National Association for the Protection of Children Against Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) raises the awareness that 'Child Protection is Everyone's Business'. NAPCAN produces resources that promote positive and practical actions to stop child abuse. Titles include: 'Children are Sacred', 'It's Not OK to Shake Babies', and 'Alternatives to Hitting Children'. NAPCAN brochures and posters are free, with donations appreciated. Information about Child Protection Week events and NAPCAN resources can be found at www.napcan.org.au or by ringing (08) 8232 8304.

Compiled by Rebecca Haigh, The Cancer Council South Australia.

Recipes sourced from www.babycentre.com.au

Eating with the family (9-12 months old)

Baby cheese colcannon

(4-6 portions)

✓ *Vegetarian*

✓ *Contains iron*

✓ *Good source of vitamin C and calcium*

Ingredients

2 medium potatoes, peeled and quartered
4 cabbage leaves, washed, and finely chopped
20g (a handful) fresh spinach
40g cheddar cheese, grated

Method

- Boil the potatoes until tender.
- Steam the cabbage and spinach over the potatoes in the last few minutes of cooking time.
- Drain and mash the potatoes, and mash in the cabbage and spinach.
- Mix in the grated cheese and serve at once.

Chickpea and tomato salad with pitta bread fingers

✓ *Vegetarian*

✓ *Contains iron*

✓ *Good source of vitamin C and calcium*

Ingredients

2 tbsps of canned chickpeas, preferably reduced salt and sugar, drained and well rinsed
1 tbsp plain full-fat yogurt
Pinch of freshly chopped or dried mint
Few fingers of cucumber
3-4 cherry tomatoes, washed and quartered
Pitta bread, toasted and sliced into small fingers

Method

- Mash the chickpeas together with the yogurt and mint.
- For babies who can manage to eat finger food, serve with the cucumber and tomato.
- For babies who prefer to eat everything from a spoon, finely chop the tomato and cucumber and mash into the chick peas.
- Serve with pieces of pitta bread.

Lamb with pasta

✓ *Excellent source of iron*

✓ *Good source of vitamin C and B vitamins*

Ingredients

200g minced lamb
1 small red onion, finely chopped
3 tomatoes, peeled and chopped
4 button mushrooms, rinsed and sliced
Half tsp thyme
150ml water
30g baby pasta, or broken spaghetti

Method

- Cook the mince in a non-stick pan until browned, breaking up the pieces.
- Drain off any surplus fat, then return mince to pan and add the onion. Fry together for 5 minutes.
- Stir in the tomatoes, mushrooms, herbs and water. Stir, cover and simmer for 15 minutes.
- Add the pasta and cook for another 10 minutes.



Feeding babies

continued ...

Canned or fresh food?

Preparing food at home from fresh ingredients is the best way to make healthy food for families and for babies. Fresh foods are not only nutritious, but they help babies to learn about the natural flavours, colours and textures of food. Cooking for babies in large quantities and freezing in small portions makes it easy to provide cheap and healthy meals from fresh ingredients. While canned baby foods can be a convenient choice try to only use them sometimes when it is not possible to use home cooked meals.

Food safety

Food should always be prepared in a clean environment to make sure it is safe for babies to eat. Hands should always be washed, and clean equipment used when preparing, serving or storing food. Animal foods like meat, chicken, fish and eggs should be well cooked, and fruit and vegetables washed or peeled before use.

Most importantly we need to remember that learning to eat can be fun! Parents should remember to relax, and enjoy feeding their babies, but have access to help and information if they need it. By supporting parents in exclusive breastfeeding to 6 months, and encouraging nutritious foods while continuing to breastfeed, we can help to give children the best start in life.

For further information on breastfeeding or starting solid foods contact: Child & Youth Health Parent Helpline, 1300 364 100; Australian Breastfeeding Association, (08) 8411 0050; Women's & Children's Hospital Health Information Centre, (08) 8161 6875.

Resources

Compiled by Jane Taylor, Centre for Health Promotion, Women's and Children's Hospital

Feeding your baby in the first year

This pamphlet has been designed for parents and childcare services. It describes when to start introducing solids to babies, and how and when to introduce types of foods. You can get more copies for parents by phoning the SA Dental Service on (08) 8350 3730.



Talking with Families about Nutrition video

The Talking with Families about Nutrition project has developed a video to help workers in early childhood settings to develop the awareness and knowledge to be confident in talking with families about nutrition. The video explores ways of developing partnerships with families so that information about healthy eating can be regularly passed onto parents.

The video can be borrowed from community health services or members can borrow it from the Gowrie Resource Centre. To borrow the video contact your local community health service or the Gowrie Resource Centre on 8352 5246 for more information on the video or becoming a member.

Baby's first foods

This fact sheet from The Children's Hospital at Westmead and Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick gives information on how and when to start introducing solids to babies. It also includes information on:

- when your baby is ready for solids
- the first spoonful
- increasing variety
- textures of foods
- things to remember

This fact sheet can be downloaded from the Children's Hospital at Westmead website at <http://www.chw.edu.au/parents/factsheets/fobabyj.htm>.



Tucker without tantrums

This fact sheet from The Children's Hospital at Westmead and Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick gives information on feeding young children. It includes information on:

- how eating problems begin
- what to try if your child is refusing food
- how to handle food fads
- alternatives to milk, vegetables and meats
- setting an example

This fact sheet can be downloaded from the Children's Hospital at Westmead website at <http://www.chw.edu.au/parents/factsheets/fotuckj.htm>

The SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership aims to promote good nutrition for all South Australian children in early childhood services.

Partners include representatives from Child Care Associations, Department of Education and Children's Services, TAFE, Gowrie Training Centre, SA Dental Service, child care centre cooks, Women's & Children's Hospital, The Cancer Council South Australia, Noarlunga and Inner Southern Community Health Services and Department of Human Services.

Editorial Policy

Food Matters aims to promote good nutrition in early childhood by providing nutrition information, advice and support to carers of young children and showcasing child care food and nutrition initiatives. While every effort is made to include articles which meet these objectives, inclusion does not necessarily imply endorsement by the SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership. This newsletter may be copied for educational and non-profit purposes with acknowledgement.

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