



Steps to Weaning and Eating

Weaning:

- Involves developing a positive relationship with food which lasts the rest of a person's life.
- Offers the opportunity for a child to experience greater independence while adapting to the life of their family.
- Offers balanced meals nutrition wise that are a part of the culture the baby is adapting to.
- Is very messy.

Signs of Readiness:

- Diminishing iron reserves in baby and in breast milk
- Amylase becomes present in baby's mouth
- Appearance of teeth (in some babies)
- Voluntary control of hand
- Sits with support for a short period
- Is actively engaging with environment through their senses
- Interested in food

Timeline:

Three Months Old:

The baby, held in arms, can be given a tiny spoonful of fresh, sweet, organic fruit juice - one spoonful a day. It is a sensory experience, not for nutrition.

Four Months Old:

The child can be having 3 - 4 tiny spoonfuls of juice two times a day.

Introduce a stale piece of bread that the child can hold to give a new taste experience

Between Five and Seven Months:

Offer the first meal midday. This will be the first time the baby will experience several tastes at once. Offer a balanced nutritional meal in tiny amounts of each.

Between Seven and 12 Months:

Add a second daily meal around breakfast time.

Add an evening meal and can introduce foods such as tofu, yogurt, beans, etc.

Start to add snacks between meals as needed and according to the baby's timetable.

Set Up and Items for Weaning and Eating:

Offer a weaning meal with child sitting at a small table and chair and caregiver across. A weaning meal should be offered when the child is alert but not starving.

Have the following ready:

- Small glass for drinking water
 - Small dishes for components of the meal
 - Very small spoon with handle that fits well in the child's hand
 - Very small spoon for the mother to use
 - Decorative placemat / tablecloth with place setting, cloth napkin, bib
 - Warm, wet washcloth
 - Small pitcher of water
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- The child should be able to see all the food on offer and have his own spoon to hold.
 - Introduce new foods one at a time and offer the same things several times before switching.
 - Change out the fruit and protein weekly, changing one component at a time
 - At the end of the first meal give the baby a chance to nurse

Family Meals:

- Gradually move towards the baby joining the family for their meals as their timetable lines up with family eating schedule.
- The child should have a small table and chair as well as a place at the family meal table.

As Your Child Grows: 12 months - onward

- Consider that you are laying the foundation for your child's relationship with food
- Be aware of your child's liquid intake (breast milk, formula, milk etc.). If they are full of liquids they won't be hungry for food.
- Provide the possibility of your child serving themselves and then call them to eat what they have served themselves
- Sit and eat as a family so your child can see you as an example of how to eat (etiquette, conversation, etc.)
- Encourage your child to sit to eat in a booster or chair that they can access themselves (or at their small table and chair). Eating happens at the table; no grazing or walking around the room.
- It may take a child up to 10 times of being exposed to a new food for them to try it. Don't give up
- Eat a common family meal, offer a variety of foods for your child to try and encourage your child to take a spoonful of each item
- Encourage cutlery usage and drinking from a real cup from 12 months onward.
- Show your child how to set up their own dishes and provide a shelf in the kitchen where they keep their own dishes and cutlery.
- Show your child how to clear their dishes at the end of the meal