

## Home Made Baby Food

### Why should I make baby food at home?

Making your own baby food has many benefits. It:

- Costs less than store bought baby foods.
- Lets you control additives and fillers.
- Lets you offer foods that your family already eats.
- Tastes better.
- Provides more nutrients.
- Helps you control texture as your baby grows.



### How do I make baby food at home?

**Gather equipment.** You will need a blender, food grinder or food processor. You may also use a fork, strainer or potato masher.

**Use foods without added salt, sugar, fat or spices such as:**

- broccoli
- apples
- green beans
- bananas
- pork
- beets
- peaches
- squash
- pears
- beef
- carrots
- prunes
- potatoes
- apricots
- egg yolks
- corn
- pineapple
- peas
- chicken
- sweet potatoes
- mixed vegetables

**Prepare storage materials.** You will need storage bags or containers, or ice cube trays.

### Before you start:

1. **Clean the area you will work in** to make the baby food. It is important to keep the work area clean when you make, store, heat or serve baby food.
2. **Clean the equipment** you will use to make the baby food. Follow guidelines of the equipment maker for cleaning the equipment.
3. **Wash your hands** before making, storing, heating or serving baby food.
4. **Cook all food** until it is tender. This means the food will “fall apart” easily.
5. **Steam foods** to cook them. Vitamins and minerals may be ruined when over-cooked. Steam cooking keeps the vitamins and minerals in the food.

### How to make baby food

#### General directions:

- Do not add salt, sugar, spices or syrups. Your baby does not need these added to the food.
- Make or process foods to the texture that is needed. A smooth texture is often best.
- Add formula, breast milk, cooking juices or water to make the baby food thinner if needed.

**Note** - Breast milk contains enzymes that will start to break down the food. If breast milk is added, be sure to add it just before you serve the food.

## Making food (continued)

- Use fresh, frozen or canned foods. Cook all fruits, vegetables and meats **before** grinding them into baby food. Remove all skin, seeds, pits and bones.
- **Stovetop:** Put vegetables in a saucepan with a little bit of water. Cover the saucepan tightly with a lid. Bring the water to a boil. When the water boils, reduce the heat so that the water simmers. Simmer for 5 to 10 minutes.
- **Microwave:** Put fruit or vegetables in a container that is safe to use in a microwave. Add a few tablespoons water. Cover with plastic wrap. Microwave for 5 to 7 minutes (time will vary for larger and smaller microwave ovens). Do not cook meat in the microwave. Meat cooked in a microwave does not grind up well.
- **Steamer:** Follow the instructions for your steamer.

## Storing baby food

- **In the refrigerator:** Cover the food tightly with plastic wrap. Label the container to show the date when the food was made. Fruits and vegetables may be used for 3 days. Meats may be used for 2 days.
- **In the freezer:** Freeze single servings of baby food in ice cube trays or on a cookie sheet.



**A single portion (serving) of a food = 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) baby food**

Be sure to cover the food before freezing. When the baby food is frozen solid, remove it from the ice cube trays or cookie sheet. Seal the frozen cubes/portions into plastic freezer bags. Label each bag to show what type of food is inside and the date it was made. Frozen portions may be kept and used for one month from the date they were made.

## How to re-heat homemade baby food

- **From the refrigerator:**
  1. Take out the portion of food needed.
  2. Put the food in a microwave safe serving dish. Microwave until warm. Be careful when you serve food that has been heated in the microwave. This food may get too hot for your baby to eat. Using the “defrost” setting may prevent over heating the food. Stir the food very well to be sure there are no areas that are too hot.
  3. You may also reheat the food on the stovetop.
- **From the freezer:**
  1. Take out the portion of food needed.
  2. Follow Steps #2 or #3 as for refrigerated foods.
  3. Do not leave the baby food out on a counter to thaw at room temperature.

**ALERT:** Call your child’s doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any concerns or if your child has special health care needs not covered by this information.

**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**