

## WEANING: NOT BEFORE 5-6 MONTHS

Weaning is the **passage from milk to solid food**. It usually can be started at about 5-6 months, when babies need nutrients in milk. It's definitely not convenient to anticipate weaning; In breastfed babies it can be started at 6 months. Before 5-6 months, babies aren't able to stay in sitting position without being supported, nor to eat from a spoon. The digestive system cannot assimilate most of the food yet.

**Let the baby guide you in deciding which moment is more suitable to start weaning:** babies will be ready when they'll appear still hungry after a milk meal or when seeing or smelling food other than milk will burst their enthusiasm. Pick a peaceful moment of the day to begin with, never push the baby to eat against his/her will; if the baby eats too little solid food, add little quantities of milk.

## MEALS AT 5-6 MONTHS

Around 4-5 meals during the day according to this:

- 3-4 milk meals (maternal or formula, type 1 up to 6 months, type 2 from 6 months on)
- 1 solid meal (usually at noon but it's not mandatory) with vegetable broth food
- Mid-morning or mid-afternoon: grated apple or pear, with no sugar

**Baby's first food** can be prepared following this recipe:

- 150-180 gr of **vegetable broth**
- 3-4 level tablespoons of **rice, corn-tapioca, soy or multi-cereal cream or semolina**
- 1 coffee spoon of **well-seasoned Parmesan**
- 1 coffee spoon of **extra virgin olive oil**

add ½ jar (40 gr) of meat baby food (lamb, rabbit, turkey).

**After another week** add 1-2 tablespoons of the pureed vegetables used to prepare the broth.

Warnings:

- In case of **constipation**, do not use rice cream and add more courgettes; In case of **diarrhoea**, use rice cream and add more potatoes and carrots
- By increasing or decreasing the total amount of food eaten by the baby, you should **maintain the proportions between the different components** of food as seen above. However, whether the baby prefers thicker food, you can compensate less liquid amount by offering water to the baby separately
- With breastfed-only babies, it is preferable to introduce the first food after 6 months

## MEALS AT 6-9 MONTHS

Starting from 6-7 months, in the evening babies can try a **second meal**, identical to the noon one, but with **cheese** (parmesan, baby processed cheese, ricotta, fresh cheese without preservatives) or **prosciutto cotto** (lean, blended or pureed) in place of meat.

Around **4-5 meals in the day** according to this:

- 2 milk meals (maternal or follow-on milk)
- 2 meals with vegetable broth food
- Mid-morning or mid-afternoon: grated or mashed apple or pear or banana, with no sugar

**Baby's first food** can be prepared following this recipe:

- 180-200 gr of **vegetable broth**
- 2 level tablespoons of **cereals**
- **Meat** (homogenised 80 gr, fresh 40 gr) or **cheese** (40 gr) or **ham** (30-40 gr)
- 1-2 coffee spoons of **well-seasoned Parmesan**
- 1-2 coffee spoons of **extra virgin olive oil**
- 2 tablespoons of blended or pureed vegetables

At **7 months** it is possible to introduce:

- In the afternoon natural whole milk yoghurt 125 gr, alone or with fresh fruit
- At lunch or dinner, as an alternative to meat or Parmesan, 1-2 times a week:
  - Fresh cheese (ricotta, *crescenza*, mozzarella): 30-40 gr
  - Pureed lean *prosciutto cotto*: 20-30 gr
  - Boiled and pureed legumes: 4-5 tablespoons

At **8 months** it is possible once a week, as an alternative to meat, to introduce:

- Fish

At **9 months** it is possible:

- Once a week, as an alternative to meat, to introduce raw egg yolk: 1 coffee spoon
- To introduce tomato, citrus fruit, fresh seasonal fruit
- Replace vegetable broth with meat broth

## MEALS AT THE END OF THE FIRST YEAR

Normally, **4 meals a day**:

1. 2 meals based on milk or dairy with whole milk (where available) or adapted follow-on milk (250 ml ca per meal) or whole cow milk; yoghurt (1 jar of whole yoghurt – fruit and/or biscuit); ricotta (80 gr or biscuit); milky flour (fruit, cereal or biscuit flavour)
2. 2 meals based on soup following this:
  - 200 gr of vegetable broth/puree or meat broth
  - 30 gr of **cereals** (pastina, bread, semolina, multi-cereal creams, flakes); **meat** (homogenised 80 gr, fresh 50 gr) or **cheese** (30-40 gr) or **ham** (30-40 gr) or **fish** (50 gr) or an **egg yolk**
  - 2 tablespoons of **extra virgin olive oil**
  - 2 level tablespoons of **Parmesan**

## SOME TIPS

### MEAT

- **Meat** should **not** be added to baby food more than **4-5 times a week**; at the beginning, in other meals it could be replaced with a tablespoon of Parmesan, then with other cheese or ham, and at the end with legumes, egg, fish

### FISH

- Fish can be introduced not before 8 months, in order to avoid allergic sensibilisation. Usually, it is added to vegetable soup, in place of meat, or it is offered aside, dressed with oil and vegetable puree; if the baby likes it, it can be prepared 2-3 times a week
- On the market you can find both lyophilised or homogenised fish, but you can also use fresh fish (or frozen), steamed or boiled
- It is preferable **to start with low-fat fish** (trout, sole, hake, cod, red snapper, grouper, pike, sea bass, sea bream, turbot, dogfish), but **after one year of age** you can offer virtually **any variety of fish**. You must avoid crustaceans (shrimps, crayfish, lobster) or shellfish (cuttlefish, squid, clams, mussels) even in the smallest amount (they should not even be tasted)
- In case of familiarity for allergy (2 parents/one parent and siblings with allergy), introducing fish should be postponed after one year of age

### EGG

- Eggs are rich in iron, protein and cholesterol, thus they are very useful in the baby's diet; however, along with cow milk, it is one of the main guilty parts of food allergies in children. For this reason, it should be introduced gradually: after 9 months of age, babies can taste yolk (raw, starting with few coffee spoons in the soup, then a whole yolk in place of meat, once a week); after one year of age, babies can be fed with the whole egg (soft- or hard-boiled, scrambled with cheese, cooked in tomato sauce; omelettes are admitted but only if cooked in the oven or in a non-stick pan with no fats)
- Packaged eggs are preferable, since they are more hygienically monitored
- In case of familiarity for allergy (2 parents/one parent and siblings with allergy), introducing egg should be postponed after one year of age

## **CHEESE**

- Processed cheese is discouraged, especially if containing polyphosphates

## **FRUIT AND VEGETABLES**

- It is preferable to give fresh seasonal fruit (in case of rejection, you can give fruit puree with no sugar)
- Fruit juice is not to be considered real fruit; it is preferable to give squeeze or shake fruit
- Tomatoes and citrus must be introduced after one year of age in case of high allergic risk (2 parents/one parent and one sibling/2 siblings with allergy)