

**PROTECT
YOUR CHILD
THROUGH**

**IMPROVED
COMPLEMENTARY
FEEDING**



COMPLEMENTARY FEEDING

Adequate nutrition is important for infants and young children to ensure optimal growth, development and health.

During the first six months of life, breast milk is the best sole source of all the energy, proteins, micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) and water for the baby. It also provides anti-infective factors which help to protect against illness. For infants whose mothers are medically unfit to breastfeed such as HIV positive mothers, replacement feeding is recommended for the first six months. Replacement feeding, means feeding the child with a suitable breast-milk substitute such as infant formula.

It is very important that for the first six months infants are either exclusively breastfed or formula fed.

Exclusive feeding means giving breast milk or infant formula alone, with no other foods or liquids such as teas, juices, *not even water*.

After six months, breast milk or infant formula alone may no longer provide adequate nutrients needed by the baby. They should begin to receive suitable and safe complementary foods while continuing to breast or formula feeding for up to two years of age. Thereafter, they should be fed from family foods.



Complementary Feeding

Complementary feeding is the process of giving an infant other foods and fluids in addition to breast milk or infant formula. These foods are called complementary foods. The period when complementary foods are introduced is crucial to the child's health, growth and development. Children are particularly vulnerable during this transitional period, and if their nutrients needs are not appropriately met, malnutrition and diseases may occur.

The introduction of complementary foods should be:

Timely

Complementary foods should not be started until at about 6 months unless the infant:

- Is not gaining weight adequately,

- Is hungry after breast or formula feeding.
- Shows interest in complementary foods (e.g. reaching for foods).

Adequate

Complementary foods should be sufficiently rich in energy, protein and micronutrients (Vitamins and Minerals) to meet the nutritional needs of a growing child.

Safe

The food should be hygienically prepared and fed with clean hands and utensils. If necessary, the prepared food should be hygienically stored for short period in a cool dry place. It is preferable that children are not given leftovers.

Appropriately Fed

Infants aged six months to one year should receive three meals and those aged one to two years should receive at least five meals. In addition, frequent breast or formula feeding should be continued.

HOW TO INTRODUCE COMPLEMENTARY FOODS

Complementary foods are chosen on the basis of their consistency, taste and acceptability by the infant. The sequence of introducing solid foods should start with foods with milder taste to those with strong taste.



For Example



- Start with cereals like porridge made from mealie-meal or sorghum and mashed potatoes, Tsabana or commercial baby cereals.
- Then cooked and mashed vegetable should be introduced gradually.
 - Fruits and meat should be introduced last.
 - Introduce one food at a time to prevent confusion and identify any allergies or intolerance to a particular food.

Also start by giving one or two tea spoonfuls and gradually increase the amount.

Give a variety of foods to improve nutrient intake :

In order for a child to be fed sufficiently, the child has to be given a variety of foods that will meet all nutritional needs. The child's meal should contain different foods from the following food groups:

- A staple such as sorghum, maize meal, and commercial cereals e.g. Tsabana.
- A protein source such as meat, beans, chickens, fish, eggs.
- A vitamin/mineral source such as dark green and yellow vegetables and fruits.
- Milk or milk products such as madila, yogurt, cheese.
- Energy rich foods such as fats (margarine, butter and oil) or oily seeds such as peanut paste to increase energy density and reduce volume.



Concerning Drinks

Healthy drinks such as water and whole or pure fruits juices are important but should be clean and safe. Drinks should not replace food, breast milk or infant formula. It is best to give drinks after a meal.

FEEDING OLDER CHILDREN (2-5 years)

After the second year, milk is still essential in a child's diet. So continue to give your child milk whether breast milk or formula milk.

- Older children should receive a variety of family foods including fruits and vegetables.
- They should be fed at least five times a day (three meals plus two nutritious snacks such as fortified maize porridge, fruits, bread, milk).

Feeding tips to encourage a child to eat more

Children's appetite and the way they are fed strongly influence how much they actually eat. The following are some tips on how to encourage a child to eat more:

- Feed when a child is hungry and not tired.
- Feed with the rest of the family.
- Give the food in the child's own plate.
- Give a variety of foods, and mix the food together so a child cannot pick out and eat only the favorite ones.
- Practice active feeding by feeding very young infants directly.
- Older children can eat by themselves but should be watched and helped.
- Sing to the children during feeding.
- Do not force-feed. If the child refuses food, take it away, cover and offer later. A child may really dislike a particular food. Try different food combinations or textures.
- Do not hurry the child, feed patiently. The child may play a bit and then eat again. Meal times should be happy and peaceful.
- Give favorite foods and avoid too spicy or salty foods.
- Give more attention when a child eats well and less when he refuses foods. A child may try to gain attention by refusing food especially if he is unhappy or insecure.

FEEDING DURING ILLNESS

Illness in young children is often associated with lack of appetite. However, it is important to:

- Increase fluid intake by more frequent breast feeds or, giving more liquid foods and fluids such as sour porridge, Mageu, yogurt, water melon and oranges.
- Give small frequent meals using foods that are easy to swallow and which the child likes such as mashed potatoes, soft boiled vegetables, minced meat.
- Patiently encourage the child to eat favorite foods and maintain close physical contact and;
- Feed slowly, patiently and minimize distractions during feeding.



- Do not force children to eat. If the child continues to refuse food, consult a health worker.

Working mothers

Breastfeed as frequent as possible especially at night. Express breast milk and show the caretaker how to feed the baby with a cup. It is safe to keep the expressed milk for 8 hours in a cool place. Show the caretaker how to prepare and give supplementary foods safely.

Stopping breastfeeding

After the second year, breastfeeding infants can gradually be stopped. Should your child stop breastfeeding at two years, continue to give other milks as part of his daily meals.

Feeding practices to enhance good feeding habits

It is important to discourage young children from developing wrong eating habits such as:

- Preference for fatty and sugary (sweets, cakes, ice-creams) foods. These should be replaced with fruits, vegetables and starchy foods.
- Teas and coffee should be avoided because they encourage unhealthy habits. They also interfere with the body's ability to use some components of the food such as iron.

HOW TO PREPARE SAFE FOODS FOR INFANTS & CHILDREN

It is important to follow basic hygiene practices when preparing food for infants to reduce the risk of illness due to contaminated foods. These basic rules include the following:

Wash Your Hands

Wash your hands thoroughly:

- Before preparing food.
- Before feeding a child.
- After changing the baby, using the toilet or after coming in contact with animals.

Teach the child to wash hands thoroughly.

Use Clean Water

Clean water is as important in preparing food for babies and young children as it is for drinking. Unclean water can cause diarrhoea and other illnesses.

Cook Food Thoroughly

Many raw foods like chicken, meat, raw milk (unpasteurized), and vegetables very often have germs, which cause diseases. Thorough cooking will kill the germs.



Avoid Giving a Child Leftover Food

- Feed infants immediately after preparation when the food is cool enough to eat.
- Cook just enough food per meal to avoid storing leftovers.
- Food prepared for infants and young children should preferably not be stored at all, as the food may be spoiled especially that most of the time the weather is too hot. Where a child is to be given food that is not freshly prepared, the food must well re-heated to boiling point.

Avoid contact between Raw Foodstuffs and Cooked Food

Cooked food can become unsafe through contact with raw food. This is because raw foods could have germs, which cause diseases.

Wash Fruits and Vegetables Before Giving to Children

These must be washed carefully with clean water. Fruits and vegetables may have soils, which are contaminated with germs. Therefore, those eaten raw must be thoroughly washes before being given to children.

Avoid Feeding Babies with Bottles

Use a spoon and cup to give drinks and liquid food to infants and young children. A cup is easier to clean than a bottle.

Store Food in a Safe Place

Store food in closed, clean containers and in safe, dry places if a refrigerator is not available. This will ensure that food is protected from flies, cockroaches, mice, rats, dogs or other animals that can carry germs to food.

Keep all Food Preparation Areas Clean

Scraps of food and crumbs can carry germs and also attract insects and animals. Refuse should be kept safe, covered and thrown away quickly.

FEEDING RECOMMEDATION FOR INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

0 - 6 MONTHS



- Breast feed as often as the child wants, day and night, at least 8 times in 24 hours.
- Do not give other foods or fluids.
- Exclusively formula feed as the child wants, day and night, at least 8 times in 24 hours.
- Do not give other foods or fluids

6 MONTHS - 12 MONTHS



- Milk feed as often as the child wants.
- Give adequate serving of: Soft porridge with peanut butter/Margarine/Milk/ Tsabana.

Mashed pumpkin/potatoes with mashed vegetables/beans/soup/gravy/pounded meat.

Milk products, Fruits e.g. Banana and fruit Juice.

Feed a child 3 times a day if breastfed and 5 times a day if not breast fed

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

- * To introduce one food at a time to prevent confusion and to identify allergies.
- * To give small frequent meals if the child is ill.
- * To avoid forced feeding.

12 MONTHS - 2 YEARS



- Milk feed as often as the child wants.
- Give 5 meals a day: 3 from family meals and 2 additional servings.

For Example:

Food introduced at 6-12 months if possible includes eggs, Meat, and fish.

Give finger food e.g. Fruits and vegetables.

2 YEARS - OLDER



Give family foods at 3 meals each day

- Also twice daily, give nutritious food between meals, such as:
- Foods available for the season groundnuts, wild fruits: mogorogorwane juice, Moretologa, mmilo, Mogwana, Mmupudu, Nyebu/bread, Phane, Moretwa, Dikgeru. Fruits e.g. melon, oranges etc. Mageu/milk/sour milk.

Produced and Designed by:

Ministry of Health
Private Bag 0038 Gaborone,
Botswana.

Toll free no: 0800 600 740

www.moh.gov.bw

April 2012



Republic of Botswana



MINISTRY OF HEALTH