

# Healthy Eating for

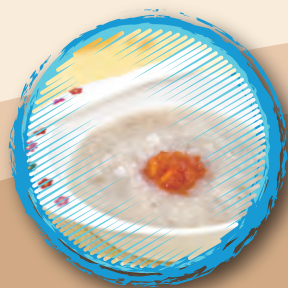
# 2

6 to 24 month old children

Child Feeding  
Online Health Talk  
(In Cantonese only)



<https://s.fhs.gov.hk/u60sk>



Department of Health

活出健康 新方向  
For health



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Website for the video:  
<http://s.fhs.gov.hk/nx6tt>

# Contents

## Baby's food and diet

Introducing new food	3
Trying foods of different textures	4
Food and nutrients	6
How to arrange daily meals for your baby	9
Making baby's dishes with a variety of foods	10
Eating out	11
Feeding during illness	11



## The eating environment

A good feeding environment	12
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## Feeding your baby

How to feed your baby	14
Adapting to a new way of eating	16
How to help your baby learn to feed himself	17
How to help your baby learn to drink from a cup	20
Parent's mission in feeding	22
Fostering healthy habits for babies	23



# Baby's food and diet

After your baby gets used to taking soft food from a spoon, you should introduce a variety of new foods one at a time. Choose foods that are rich in iron.

- Try foods of different textures according to your baby's ability to chew;
- Breastmilk or formula milk is still his main food.  
As he eats more solid food, he will require less milk;
- Babies younger than 1 year old accept new food more readily.  
Take this opportunity to let him experience a wide range of foods.

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## Introducing new food

- Offer new food in the morning or at noon.  
This allows you to watch for any food allergies;
- Introduce new foods one at a time.  
Begin with 1 to 2 teaspoons and let your baby try the food for 2 to 4 days;
- Add the new food into infant cereal or congee, or offer it to your baby directly.



Moving on

## My baby is not willing to eat the new food. What can I do?

- Your baby may show some strange facial expressions when tasting a new food. This does not mean that he refuses to eat the food;
- If he opens his mouth for the food, continue to feed him;
- If he does not want to eat, try again in 1 to 2 weeks;
- Some babies need to try 8 to 15 times before they will eat a new food, so be patient.  
Do not give up after only 2 or 3 tries.



Choose food for your baby from your family's food basket.



## Trying foods of different textures



Start with smooth puree, then move to mashed food with small soft lumps, and then to minced or chopped food. The gradual change in food texture helps your baby to learn to chew.

Babies differ in their development. Parents should give food of appropriate textures according to their babies' ability to chew.

6 months

Smooth puree



Rice cereal



Vegetable puree

- Rice cereal or wheat cereal; thin congee;
- Strained vegetables, fruit purees.

Soft and mashed food



Fruit puree



Mashed egg yolk

- Thick congee;
- Mashed vegetables, fruits, egg yolk or whole egg, tofu, meat and fish.

Soft and Minced food



Minced fish meat



Vegetable thick congee

- Thick congee or soft rice;
- Finely chopped vegetables and minced meat;
- Mashed melons and fruits; mashed beans with the skin peeled off;
- Small bits of bread.

1-1½ years

Food cut into small pieces



ABC pasta



Vegetable soft rice

- Soft rice; soft boiled noodles or pasta cut into small pieces;
- Chopped vegetables, meat and fish; soft fruits;
- Mashed beans;
- Small bread pieces.

To learn more about food textures, please refer to the "7-day Healthy Meal Planning Guide for 6 to 24 month old children".

When your baby can eat chopped food, he can share food with the family.

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I can eat chopped veggies and minced meat even though I have no teeth!



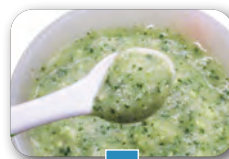
## Babies can do it!

- Most 8-month-old babies can handle finely minced food;
- They can chew with their gums;
- If they are only fed purees, they may have problems eating food of coarse texture in the future.

## How do babies react when they first try thick or lumpy food?

### Answer

- At first, babies may eat less or eat more slowly;
- When the food is so lumpy and tough that your baby cannot chew it, he will spit it out, or even gag;
- If this happens, prepare the food in a finer texture and let your baby get used to it gradually.



## Beware of choking hazards

- Do not give babies food that is small and hard, like sweets, or food that is sticky, such as glutinous rice dumplings;
- When you give your baby food that is small and roundish, such as grapes or cherries, remove the seeds and cut the food into small pieces first;
- Be careful to remove the bones from meat or fish.



## Babies' bowel movements



As your baby eats more solid food, his bowel movements may change. The stool may become thicker and have tiny food pieces in it. If your baby passes runny stool or there is blood or mucus, bring him to see a doctor as soon as possible.

## Food and nutrients

### Eating a variety of foods

As your baby eats more solid food, you should include a variety of foods in his meals. This ensures that he will enjoy well-balanced nutrition.



### Main sources of nutrients

#### Grains

Carbohydrates, proteins, several B vitamins (excluding vitamin B12), magnesium

Whole grain foods such as brown rice and whole wheat bread provide more vitamin E and dietary fibres. Offer these foods to babies when they can chew better.



Rice, noodles, pasta, bread, oatmeal

#### Eggs/meat

Protein, fat, cholesterol, iron, zinc, magnesium, vitamin B and B12

- Fish provides more unsaturated fat, **fatty fish also contains vitamin D**;
- Avoid eating fish of high levels of methylmercury;
- Egg yolk and liver are rich in vitamin A and contain vitamin D (Avoid eating liver too often).



Fish, chicken, pork, beef, mutton, liver, seafood

#### Dry beans and other bean products

Protein, carbohydrates, several B vitamins (excluding vitamin B12), iron, zinc, dietary fibres

(Tofu made by the traditional method provides calcium)



Red kidney beans, chickpeas, red beans, cowpeas, and other bean products

For more nutritional information about food, please refer to the "7-day Healthy Meal Planning Guide for 6 to 24 month old children".



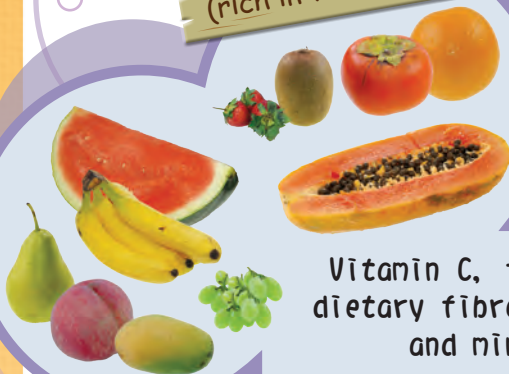
## Vegetables

Carotene, vitamin C, folic acid, dietary fibre, potassium and minerals

Green leafy vegetables: choy sum, bok choy, broccoli, Chinese kale, leaf mustard, Chinese spinach, etc. (rich sources of iron, calcium, vitamin E and K)



Kiwifruits, strawberries, oranges, papaya, persimmons (rich in vitamin C)



## Fruits

Vitamin C, folic acid, dietary fibre, potassium and minerals

(Dark yellow fruits contain carotene)

## Milk and milk products

Protein, saturated fat, calcium, vitamin A, vitamin B12

Cow's milk should not replace breastmilk or formula milk for babies under 1 year old as their main source of food.



Cheese, yoghurt, milk





## Water



- After eating solid food, offer babies boiled water to drink so that they can get used to it;
- Babies usually drink a few sips of water each time and that is enough;
- Do not replace boiled water with glucose water, juice or sweet drinks. This protects babies from developing a bad habit of drinking sugary drinks.

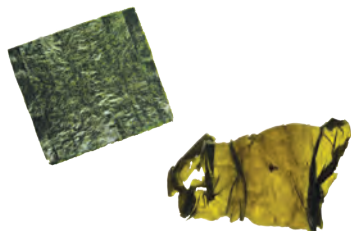
## Babies need iron-rich foods





After 6 months of age, babies need more iron. They should eat adequate amounts of iron-rich food daily.

-  Rice or wheat cereal with iron added is a good choice;
-  Iron in meat, fish and egg yolk is easier to absorb;
-  Vitamin C in fruits helps the body to absorb the iron in green leafy vegetables and dry beans;
-  When your baby eats meat or egg yolk and vegetables daily, you can gradually replace the rice cereal with congee.



## Iodine is essential for the development of the nervous system. What foods provide iodine?



-  Kelp, seaweed (They have a high iodine content, so eating a small amount is enough.);
-  Iodised salt;
-  Seawater fish, seawater shrimp, shellfish;
-  Milk, egg yolk.

## DHA helps in the development of babies' nervous systems. What foods contain DHA?





Fish is the main source of DHA. Salmon, sardines and halibut are rich sources. Golden thread fish, Big eyes and Pomfret also provide DHA.



Put a little vegetable oil in my food!



## Vegetable oil

-  When cooking for your baby, add a small amount of vegetable oil;
-  This provides your baby with energy, and also helps him absorb fat-soluble vitamins;
-  Vegetable oils provide essential fatty acids that are needed for growth and the development of the brain;
-  Various types of vegetable oils differ in their composition. They can be used in turns or in mixtures.

Eating a variety of foods helps us maintain good health.



## How to arrange daily meals for your baby

### Babies at 6 to 8 months

Milk is the main food. Your baby needs about 5 milk feedings per day. For 2 to 3 of those feedings, offer him solid food first and then give him milk. Introduce various nutritious foods to your baby.



#### Feeding solid food

- At first, offer babies 1 to 2 tablespoons of solid food;
- As babies get used to chewing and swallowing, they will eat more solid food;
- Some babies are more interested in eating solid food at the beginning of a meal. They may soon get tired from chewing and will not eat much. If so, give them milk.

#### Feeding breastmilk or formula milk

- Feed babies milk according to their needs and stop when they show signs of fullness;
- As babies eat more solid food, they take less milk and need milk feedings less often.

### When is it appropriate to replace one milk feeding with a meal of solid food?

#### Answer

If grains, veggies, meat (or fish, eggs) and oil are all provided in most of your baby's meals, and for several days he does not want to take milk after eating a meal, he can skip one milk feeding.



Make sure your baby eats the meat lumps to obtain sufficient nutrients.

### Babies at 9 to 11 months

Your baby needs about 5 feedings a day. In 2 to 3 meals, he eats mainly solid food.



#### Feeding solid food

- Most babies at 8 to 9 months can have 1 to 2 milk feedings replaced by solid food;
- Babies eat 2 to 3 main meals of solid food every day;
- You can also give your baby some fruits once or twice daily as a snack.

#### Feeding breastmilk or formula milk

- Continue breastfeeding;
- Babies who are bottle fed generally need about 2 to 3 milk feedings and around 500 to 600 ml of milk per day;
- Feeding too much milk and too often may reduce your baby's appetite for other food.

## Feeding times

- At 6 months of age, most babies already have a regular feeding pattern. They need a feed about every 3 to 4 hours. Most of them can sleep through night, no longer require a night feeding.
- Babies start to eat with their families. They gradually adapt to eating according to the family mealtime schedule.
- At about 1 year old, parents should set up a regular mealtime schedule for their babies.



## Making baby's dishes with a variety of foods

- Mix and match vegetables, meat, fish or eggs with rice cereal, congee or soft rice to make a tasty and nutritious meal;
- Give fruits to your baby after a meal or as snacks;
- Choosing foods in turn and changing food combinations can help your baby get used to new foods.

### Around 7 months

Rice cereal with  
choy sum & egg yolk +  
Papaya puree



### Around 8 months

Thick congee with chicken,  
carrot & Shanghai white  
cabbage + Kiwi sticks



### Over 1 year old

ABC pasta with  
tomato, beef & bok choy +  
Orange



Please refer to the food combinations in the menus and the recipes in the "7-day Healthy Meal Planning Guide for 6 to 24 month old children".

## Eating out

- Bring along your baby's food, feeding utensils, bibs and scissors, etc.;
- Choose a restaurant that is hygienic and provides a baby seat;
- Here are some food suggestions for your baby:
  - Infant cereal, fruits;
  - Pre-packaged baby food: check the "best before" date. Throw away any left-overs;
  - Share foods from dishes that are lightly-seasoned and soft, such as steamed fish, boiled vegetables, tofu, etc.;
  - Breastmilk or formula milk.



### Q Is it safe to bring cooked food in a thermal flask when going out?

**A** In general, a small thermal flask cannot keep food at a safe temperature (i.e. keeping hot food at 60°C or above) for a long period. To reduce the risk of bacterial growth, the food must be eaten within two hours after it is cooked if it is kept in a thermal flask.

## Feeding during illness

### Increase fluid intake

**Reason** The body loses more water than usual during illness.

- Offer your baby fluid more often;
- You may also give your baby milk, water or clear soup (such as melon soup, tomato soup).

After recovery, your baby's appetite returns. He may eat more than he used to.



### Give food that is easy-to-swallow

**Reason** Your baby may lose his appetite and may not want to chew.

- Give foods that are soft like melons, fish, chicken, tofu, soft rice or congee;
- Your baby may drink more milk and eat less solid food;
- Adjust the number of feedings and the amount according to his needs.





# The eating environment

Parents should arrange a good eating environment when feeding their babies. This makes feeding babies easier and also helps them to:

- 🍴 Enjoy eating;
- 🍴 Master the skill of feeding themselves;
- 🍴 Develop good eating habits.

Watch Video



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## A good feeding environment



Parents can arrange the feeding environment in the following ways:

### 1. Turn off the TV and put away toys:

- 🔍 This keeps your baby focused on eating and makes him more motivated to feed himself and to use a spoon;
- 🔍 It increases the chances for him to communicate with you;
- 🔍 He will be more aware of when he is full so that he will not overeat;
- 🔍 It prevents your baby from developing the bad habit of playing while eating.

Is it right to let babies watch TV while eating?



#### What researches have found

- 😞 Eating while watching TV leads to over-eating;
- 😞 Watching TV is associated with delays in speech development in children under 2 years old;



Therefore, you should not let children under 2 years old watch TV.

### 2. Sit your baby in the same chair for each meal

- 🔍 This helps your baby to learn that 'sitting here' means 'it is time to eat', and to form the habit of sitting down to eat.

Parents can choose a suitable high chair, a booster chair or a seat according to the home setting.

### 3. Let your baby have his own dining tray or sit at the dining table

- 🔍 Mealtime will be more pleasurable as he can reach the food and use the spoon easily;
- 🔍 The tray can also catch food spills for easy clean-up later.



#### As reminder:

It is difficult to feed older babies while they are sitting on a flooring mat, sofa, stroller or baby walker, as they may try to move about and crawl away.



# Feeding your baby



## How to feed your baby

Babies of age 6 to 11 months are curious about their surroundings. They are easily distracted during feeding.

By following the tips below, you can help your baby eat well and develop his social and self care skills.

### More interactions bring more pleasure

- Respond to your baby's actions so that he feels he is being cared for. He will find eating enjoyable;
- Chat with him about the food;
- When he does well, praise him.



Sweetheart! Tomato fish congee! So yummy!



### Feeding at your baby's own pace

- Observe your baby as he eats;
- Do not rush him;
- Feeding too fast can easily lead to choking or over-eating.

### Feeding according to your baby's needs

- Babies generally get full within 15 to 20 minutes;
- When your baby is full, he will be less interested in eating and slow down;
- As he ages, his reaction to being urged to eat after he is full gets stronger, for example he may push away the spoon.

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Be responsive to your baby's needs in feeding and act accordingly.  
Your baby may show the following behaviours during feeding:

### Baby's behaviour

### Possible reasons

### How to respond?

#### Refuses to eat



He is not used to the new food textures yet.

He is not used to the new food or tastes.

He is already full.

- Try different cooking methods;
- Adjust the food textures;
- Try different food combinations and different food tastes;
- Let him try the new food another time.

- Call him gently to draw his attention to the food;
- If he still shows no interest in the food, he is probably full.

#### Gags while swallowing



He is not used to eating food with thick and coarse textures, or big food pieces yet.

He is being fed too fast or too much.

- Stay calm. After cleaning up, let him try again;
- If he continues to spit the food out, you need to make the food softer and smoother.

Feed him more slowly.

#### Grabs or points at the food



He wants more.

He wants to hold the food.

Keep on feeding him.

Offer him finger food or a spoon.

## Adapting to a new way of eating



During the transitional period of learning to eat solid food, babies are also learning to eat independently.


When feeding them, parents should make the following two changes:

1. Let your baby eat with you together as a family

2. Help your baby learn to feed himself

What are Mum and Dad eating? I want to try too!

### 1. Eating together as a family

 Expose him to a greater variety of food at the family table

Babies have more chances to taste new foods and family foods. This helps them accept new foods more easily.







 Let him watch others eating

Through watching and copying how others eat, babies learn to feed themselves and enjoy eating more.

 Help him develop social skills

Family members actively communicate with each other during mealtimes. Babies will love to join in.

### How to eat together with your baby

-  Let your baby eat with family members for at least one meal each day;
-  Allow him to hold the food to eat or explore the spoon while you feed him;
-  At start, you need to prepare the food for him separately;
-  Let him taste the family foods that are suitable for him. This helps him adapt to eating the family's food.



## 2. Learning to feed themselves

From 8 to 12 months of age, babies pick up daily objects and try to understand their use. They also learn to drink from a cup and hold food to eat at this stage.



The first lesson in self-care is to guide your baby to feed himself.

### How to help your baby learn to feed himself

- 🍌 Your baby is ready to learn to feed himself when he reaches out for food.
- 🍌 Stay with him during mealtime. Watch him and respond to him appropriately.

#### Useful tips

Clean your baby's hands and face before and after meals. Avoid wiping his hands too often during meals, as this may disturb his interest in eating.

#### When your baby ...



Reaches out for the food

#### You can ...

- 🍌 Prepare food that is easy for your baby to hold and eat.

- 7 to 10 cm long strips of soft and cooked sweet potatoes, vegetable stalks, carrots, broccoli and meat;
- Baby biscuits (occasionally).

#### Note

The foods should be soft enough to be squashed using your fingers. Leave the vegetable skin so that it is easier to be picked up by your baby.



Picks up small objects with his fingers

- 🍌 Cut the food into thin slices or cubes for your baby to pick up.

- Thin slices of banana or soft fruits;
- Cheese cubes, small pieces of bread, soft cooked macaroni or pasta.



## When your baby ...



Reaches out for the spoon



- Dips the spoon into the bowl and then puts it into his mouth as if to eat

At about 12 months

- Becomes more skillful

At 12 to 18 months

Why does my baby put everything she picks up into her mouth?



## You can ...

- Give him a spoon to explore. Feed him with another spoon.

The spoon should be:

- Made of baby-safe material with a small, round tip and a thick handle.



- Assist him in using a spoon. He is still learning to use the spoon, you may still need to feed him;

- Offer him finger food to hold and eat.

At 6 to 12 months, babies use various senses to learn about an object, e.g. touching, smelling, banging, putting it into the mouth, and observing how others respond to their actions. This also helps them learn whether the object is edible.

Pay attention to home safety when helping your baby to learn and explore:

- Put away things that may cause choking or harm;
- Always stay close and keep an eye on your baby;
- Maintain good hygiene in your home.

## During feeding, your baby may...

## How you can respond



Grab your feeding spoon

🥄 Let him take it if it is suitable for him.

🥄 Feed him with another one.



Bang with a spoon

Babies usually explore objects in this way.

🥄 Let him play with it gently.

🥄 If the noise disturbs others, distract him and take away the spoon.



Act like he is "playing"  
with the food

Babies learn about the food by touching, pinching, tasting, dropping or throwing it.

🥄 You do not need to stop him.  
Draw his attention to the spoon and food.  
Feed him when he opens his mouth.

🥄 If he tends to ignore the food you offer him and continues "playing", he is full.  
You should stop feeding him.



Pick up the food and eat

🥄 Praise him.

## How to help your baby learn to drink from a cup

At 7 to 9 months of age, offer your baby a cup and help him to drink from it.




### Be prepared:

When learning to use a cup, babies may throw or knock over the cup. They might even choke while they drink too.

### Stages of learning to drink from a cup



#### 7 months

Learning to drink from a cup

-  Give your baby a training cup or small regular cup;
-  Fill the cup with a small amount of water;
-  Hold the cup close to his lower lip and tilt it. At this stage, he is able to take a sip.

#### 8 - 12 months

Your baby can hold the cup and drink from it.

-  Let him hold the cup handles. As he drinks, stay close and offer help. He can drink a few sips continuously;
-  You can put water, milk or clear soup into the cup.



#### 12 - 18 months

-  Most babies can hold and drink from a cup.

By 18 months of age, assist your baby to stop drinking from feeding bottle to protect his teeth.



### Babies are more willing to try using a cup when:

-  Parents are drinking water. This is because they love copying adults;
-  They are thirsty, e.g. after eating bread or biscuits.



## Choosing a cup



It may be easier for babies to start with a training cup. When he uses it well, you can give him a small regular cup with two handles.

### Cups without no-spill design

Water flows from the spout freely when the cup is tilted.



Turn the no-spill cup to free-flow cup simply by removing the valve from the lid.

### Small size

It is easy to hold.

### Handles on both sides

Your baby can hold onto the cup more easily.

### A spout

This helps your baby drink from the cup more easily.

### Transparent container

You can see the water flow when your baby drinks.

### Safe material

Choose cups that are bisphenol A (BPA) free.

### A suitable training cup

## Why is it better to use a free-flow training cup?

Water flows freely when babies drink from the cup. This helps babies gradually adapt to drinking from a regular cup.

My baby doesn't like the spout of the training cup!

Give him a small regular cup. Help him and allow him to explore. Be patient. He will drink from it with time.



I want to drink  
with a straw.



## Babies can do it!

- 👧 At about one year old, babies can drink or sip using a straw;
- 👧 After your baby can use a cup with a straw, he should stop using the feeding bottle.

### Caution:

- Stay with your baby and supervise him whenever he eats;
- Do not give drinks with solid bits or let him sip these drinks with a straw.

## Parent's mission in feeding

During the transition to eating solid food, your mission is to:


- 🔑 Provide your baby with different kinds of nutritious food;
- 🔑 Offer your baby food textures that match his stage of development and vary the food combinations;
- 🔑 Provide a suitable eating environment, avoid screen time with electronic media for your baby;
- 🔑 Accept that your baby knows how much he needs to eat;
- 🔑 Identify your baby's signs of hunger and fullness, and feed him accordingly;
- 🔑 Help your baby learn to feed himself and to drink from a cup;
- 🔑 Establish a regular feeding schedule that fits in with family routines.








## Fostering healthy habits for babies



 Babies learn by copying. Parent should be the role models and eat a balanced diet, include grains, vegetables, fruit, meat, fish, eggs and beans, milk or milk products in daily diet;

 Make your home environment safe for babies to move about. Let babies be physically active several times a day in various ways. Play with your baby more often on a floor mat. Let him move about either by rolling, crawling or cruising along furniture;

 As children grow, they start to walk. Outdoor play and physical activities help them learn and develop;

 Clean your baby's mouth daily:

**Step 1** Wet a piece of gauze or a handkerchief with drinking water;

**Step 2** Wrap it around your finger and then gently put the finger inside your baby's mouth;

**Step 3** Rub your baby's gums as well as his teeth.

Active babies  
Smart babies (text)



s.fhs.gov.hk/etrpu











For more information, please refer to the booklet "Oral Health Care for Your Children" or visit [www.toothclub.gov.hk](http://www.toothclub.gov.hk).





## Healthy eating for 6 to 24 month old children

### "Moving On" - Reminder to parents

When feeding a 6 to 12-month-old baby, you should:

-  Offer your baby a variety of foods (including grains, vegetables, fruits, meat and fish) while continue breastfeeding or formula milk feeding;
-  As your baby consumes a wider range and larger quantity of solid foods, he needs less milk. Feed him milk according to his demand. After 9 months of age, babies usually eat solid food to replace 2 or 3 milk feedings;
-  Give your baby iron-rich food – i.e. infant cereal, meat, fish or egg yolk, green leafy vegetables or beans;
-  Offer foods that contain vitamin D – fatty fish, egg;
-  Gradually change food textures – from thick puree to soft lumpy food;
-  When your baby is around 7 to 9 months old, help him learn to drink from a cup and let him hold the food to eat;
-  Seat your baby on a high chair to eat with the family;
-  While feeding, talk with and respond to your baby so that he feels relaxed and happy.

If your baby has the following conditions at 10 months of age, you should consult your doctor or nurse:

-  He can only eat food purees or drink milk, and does not accept soft lumpy food like congee with minced meat and vegetables;
-  He refuses to eat all of the foods in any one of the basic food groups, e.g. refusing to eat vegetables, fruits, or meats.

If you have problems feeding your baby,  
please consult your doctor or nurse.



To learn more about healthy eating for 6 to 24 month old children,  
please refer to the booklets "Getting Started", "Ready to Go"  
and "7-day Healthy Meal Planning Guide".

Booklet content will be updated from time to time. For the latest information, please refer to the website of the Family Health Service of the Department of Health.



**Family Health Service**

Website: [www.fhs.gov.hk](http://www.fhs.gov.hk)

24-hour information hotline: 2112 9900