

Making your own baby food (for babies 6 to 9 months)

Making your own baby food can be a rewarding experience and for many mothers it is a labour of love. It is an easy and convenient way to provide a variety of different foods to meet your baby's changing needs. All you have to do is set aside a few sticks of carrots, a couple of pears or some pieces of chicken to steam, stew or boil while preparing your own meal.

Why make your own baby food?

Saves money – Commercially prepared baby food can be costly. Making your own baby food, using fresh or frozen foods can cost less.

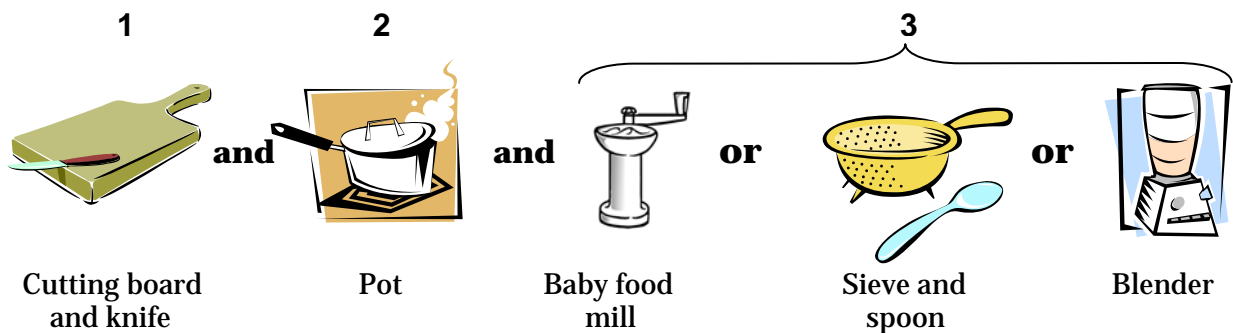
Adds variety – The selection of commercially prepared baby foods is limited. You can offer more variety by making your own baby food.


Easy to prepare and store – You don't need fancy equipment to make your own baby food. Freshly made baby food can be stored in the refrigerator or freezer to be used when needed.

Gives you control over texture – By making your own baby food you can change the texture to meet your baby's changing needs. This will make the transition to table food easier.



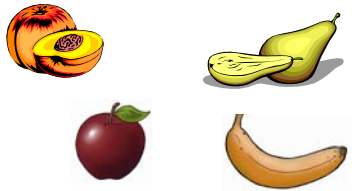

What do you need to get started?

You will need a little bit of time, a clean work area and three pieces of equipment:



Before you start, wash your hands, and wash and sanitize all equipment. You can sanitize equipment using clean hot water at least 77°C (170°F) or soak in a bleach solution with the water temperature at least 24°C (75°F) and soak in a bleach solution (2 ml (½ teaspoon) bleach per 1 litre/4 cups water). 

How do you prepare homemade baby food?

Foods	Preparation instructions	Things to note
<p>Grains</p> <p>Choose an iron-fortified infant cereal.</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Measure out the amount you think your baby will eat. 2) Add breastmilk, water or formula and stir. 	<p>Stir well to ensure all the lumps are removed and it is the same temperature throughout.</p> <p>If the cereal you choose already contains formula or milk, you only need to add water.</p>
<p>Vegetables</p> <p>Try fresh or frozen vegetables like beans, peas, carrots, sweet potatoes, squash and beets.</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Wash, peel and slice vegetables. 2) Bring water to a boil in a sauce pan. Add vegetables and boil for 10-12 minutes or until tender. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> Place vegetables into a steamer for 7-12 minutes or until tender. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> Place vegetables in a microwave-safe bowl with a little water and cook on medium high heat for five minutes or until tender. 3) Remove vegetables from heat and drain. Save the cooking liquid to adjust the texture. 4) Finely mash or blend (see next page). 	<p>Prepare vegetables without adding salt or seasonings. There is no need to salt the water when cooking vegetables for your baby.</p> <p>It is okay to use canned vegetables - just drain and rinse before cooking.</p> <p>Don't let your own likes and dislikes limit the foods you offer your baby.</p>
<p>Fruit</p> <p>Try fresh or frozen fruits like apples, peaches, pears, bananas, apricots and blueberries.</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Wash, peel, pit and/or seed, and slice fresh fruit. 2) If using a hard fruit, such as apples, boil in a small amount of water to soften. 3) Finely mash or blend with saved water (see next page). 	<p>You can mash some fruits like bananas or ripe pears without cooking them first.</p> <p>You can use canned fruit to make baby food. Be sure to choose fruits packed in fruit juice or water, not syrup. Drain before mashing.</p> <p>Frozen fruit should be thawed before being mashed.</p>
<p>Meat</p> <p>Use unseasoned, lean, raw beef, lamb, pork, chicken, turkey or fish.</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Boil, steam, bake, broil or stew meat. Cook until tender and meat separates easily from the bone. 2) Cut into small pieces and remove all bones and fat after cooking. 3) Finely grind or blend adding water or broth to get the proper texture (see next page). 	<p>If cooking fish, use deboned fish fillets. Simmer fillets in water or whole milk for 5-10 minutes until the fish flakes easily with a fork.</p> <p>Cook meats without adding salt or seasonings.</p>

What are the different blending methods?

To blend baby food, you can use any of the following methods. Remember that your baby will only need finely mashed or blended foods for a short period of time. Make foods lumpier as your baby learns to eat foods with more texture.

Baby food mill



Place the cooked food into the baby food mill. Grind food into a clean bowl. You may need to add some liquid to moisten the food to make sure it is the right texture.

or

Sieve and spoon



Mash the cooked food with a fork and press through the sieve with a spoon. Collect the food from the bottom of the sieve into a clean dish.

or

Blender



Use any type of blender. Blend about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cooked food with a small amount of liquid. Blend for a short period of time. Do not over-blend.

How do you store homemade baby food?

To store in the refrigerator

Once prepared, you can store homemade baby food in a small, clean, tightly sealed container in the refrigerator for up to two days.

To store in the freezer

To freeze, put prepared baby food into an ice cube tray, or drop by spoonful onto a clean cookie sheet. Cover the food with plastic wrap and place in freezer. Once the food is frozen, remove it from the tray and place into a re-sealable freezer bag. Remove as much air from the bag as possible. Label and write the date on each bag so you will know which cubes to use first. Baby food can be kept in the freezer for up to two months.

To freeze your homemade baby food you will need



Prepared baby food and clean spoon



Ice cube tray or cookie sheet



Re-sealable freezer bags



Freezer

How do you thaw frozen baby food?

Thaw frozen baby food in the refrigerator. Once it has been thawed, heat the cube(s) of food in a double boiler or in a heatproof bowl in a pot of warm water for a few minutes.

You can also use a microwave to thaw and heat the baby food. Microwave on medium-low heat for about 30 seconds. Baby food should be lukewarm. **DO NOT OVER HEAT!** Be sure to stir well to ensure all the food is the same temperature to prevent burning your baby's mouth. Do not refreeze thawed food.

Safety tip

Baby food that is thawed on the counter may make your baby sick. Always thaw baby food in the refrigerator.

Keep in mind your baby will tell you when they have had enough or if they want more, so watch your baby's cues.

Feeding your baby is a wonderful way for the two of you to share quality time. Be patient and keep mealtime a happy time. Stay positive and enjoy watching your baby grow.

