

## What?

Around the age of 6 months, an infant's need for energy and nutrients begins to exceed what is provided by breast milk/formula. Complementary foods are necessary to meet those needs. An infant at this age is also developmentally ready for other foods. If complementary foods are not introduced around this time, or if given inappropriately, an infant's growth may falter.

## When?

Infants develop at different rates and recommendations have changed over time. The best time to start CF is when infant is developmentally ready-at around 6 months of age but not before 4 months

- Able to sit with support and good head and neck control
- Putting toys/objects in mouth
- Watching others with interest when eating
- Seeming hungry between milk feed

## How?

CF is a learning process and infants only learn to develop their feeding skills and accept and enjoy new tastes if they are given the opportunity to try them. This can be done in stages

# Complementary Feeding

-the process starting when breast milk/formula alone is no longer sufficient to meet the nutritional needs of infants.





## Stage 1: Beginning Solids

This can be done at any time during the day that is convenient

1<sup>st</sup> few tastes-best to give some milk feed before

Amount given should always be as much as the infant is happy to eat

As feeding skills develop, the infant will gradually take more and other foods can be offered for one and then two other meals

**Textures:** smooth puree or well mashed food offered from a shallow spoon

**Skills learning:** taking food from spoon, moving food from front to back of mouth for swallowing (often mistaken for spitting out!)

**Foods:** all vegetables/all fruits/all cereals/well cooked lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dhal, lentils, hummus, chickpeas, pulses, plain yogurt (no added salt or sugar)

## Stage 2: 6-9months

If weaning started at 6 months, infants should be encouraged to move onto mashed food as quickly as possible.

**Skills learning:** moving lumps around mouth, chewing lumps, self feeding using hands and fingers, sipping from cup

**Foods:** From all 4 food groups, soft finger foods (eg fruit pieces, cooked veg sticks, cooked pasta pieces, cheese cubes, meat may still need to be pureed)

**Textures:** Mashed food with soft lumps, soft finger foods, liquids in lidded beaker

## Stage 3: 9-12months

**Skills learning:** Chewing minced and chopped food, self feeding attempts with spoon

**Foods:** From all 4 food groups, harder finger foods (eg raw fruit, fruits with pips/stones removed, raw veg, breadsticks, crackers, rice cakes, mini sausages)

**Textures:** Harder finger foods, minced chopped family foods

*Soft lumps will encourage infants to learn to move lumps from side to side in their mouth to be chewed*

*Stages 2-3 can bring on fear of choking; infants with good head control will cough back lumps that need further chewing-this is a normal learning process*

*Infants should be introduced to a cup at around 5-6 months-aids speech and language development. Open cups best choice-need to encourage drinking not sucking*

