



Finger Food for Babies

Finger foods are soft pieces of food that your baby can pick up and eat easily. Eating finger foods helps your child:

- learn how to bite and chew food
- use fingers and hands to feed themselves
- get used to different food textures.

There is no set time that all babies are ready to try finger foods. Babies can enjoy soft finger foods before they have teeth. They can mash foods into smaller pieces using their gums.

Finger foods are fun for babies. Most babies are messy as they learn to eat. As they get older they get better at putting food into their mouths.

Steps You Can Take

At about six months it is important to offer different textures including pureed, lumpy and mashed foods. To help your baby get used to a variety of textures try giving finger foods as well. Your child should be able to sit up well in a high chair without support. Other signs that your baby is ready to eat by themselves are:

- grabbing the spoon during feeding
- trying to take food from your plate.
- learning to crawl

Getting Started

- Start with soft, cut up foods. At first, your baby might just scoop up the food in their fist, but they will soon learn to pick up pieces using the thumb and index finger.
- Peel and cut fruit into small pieces. Remove pits.
- Cook vegetables until they are soft. Grate hard raw vegetables.
- Don't use hard foods like raw vegetable sticks for teething. Your baby can break off a piece and choke.
- Avoid hard and sticky foods that can cause choking (e.g. nuts, seeds, raisins, popcorn, ice cubes, chips, gum, peanut butter on a spoon, hard candies or small candy)
- Cut round foods such as carrots and grapes lengthwise and crosswise into small pieces.
- Start with small amounts and offer more if your child still seems hungry.



Ideas for Finger Foods

Offer a variety of foods from Canada's Food Guide*.



Whole Grains

Whole wheat toast, unsalted crackers, roti, tortilla, rice cakes, melba toast, whole grain o-shaped cereal, cooked soft pasta (e.g. macaroni, rotini, and penne)



Vegetables and Fruit

Pieces of ripe fruit without peel or skin: avocado, banana, peaches, pears, kiwi, melon; soft cooked vegetables: broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, green beans, potatoes, squash, sweet potatoes, yams or zucchini



Protein Foods

Grated or small pieces of pasteurized cheese (e.g. cheddar, mozzarella), small, pea-sized pieces of tender meat or poultry, ground meat or poultry, fish (no bones), tofu, pieces of egg, small beans (e.g. black beans, navy beans), larger beans cut in half (e.g. kidney beans)



Other Tips

- Sit your child in a high chair to eat.
- Never leave your child alone while they are eating.
- Sit down with your baby while they eat. If possible, eat with them.
- If your baby is not eating foods with a lumpy texture or finger foods by 9 months, talk to your health care provider.

* <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

Adapted from materials produced by York Region Public Health and Healthlink BC.



Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729

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