

Moving on to Lumpy Food

Speech & Language Therapy

Is your baby having difficulty moving on from smooth puree to lumpy foods?

Many babies find this tricky. By following the tips in this leaflet, you will be able to help your baby to move on to thicker and lumpier foods.



Is your baby ready?

First, let's check if your baby is ready:

- ✓ Can your baby sit up unsupported, holding their head steady?
- ✓ Can your baby reach and grab toys, and take them to their mouth accurately?



If you have answered no to either of these questions, your baby might not be ready to progress to lumpier food textures just yet. Wait until you can answer yes to these questions, before introducing lumpy foods. You might want to discuss your baby's development further with a health professional such as your Health Visitor.

Is gagging normal?

It is normal for babies to gag when they are learning to eat a lumpy texture. Babies might cough lumps back up which need more chewing. Keep calm when this happens and reassure your baby that it is ok. Your baby needs lots of practise.

TIPS

- Offer your baby foods at the same time as the rest of the family. This helps your baby to learn that eating is fun and enjoyable. Your baby will be able to watch and learn.
- Your baby should always be in a supported sitting position when trying foods. A high chair will help to support your baby.



- Start by thickening the smooth puree your baby is used to eating. You can do this by adding baby rice, cereal or instant potato. Your baby will need to get used to this thicker texture before we add any lumps.

- Next, begin to leave some small, soft lumps in the food. Babies have hard gums which can squash lumps well. Try mashed ripe banana, avocado or soft-cooked root vegetables such as carrot. Your baby might find these textures easier to manage than those in baby food you can buy.

Avoid vegetables with a skin on such as peas and sweetcorn and avoid small hard lumps or foods which combine a mixture of liquid and lumps. These textures will be too tricky for your baby to control at the beginning.

- Introduce changes slowly. Introduce one new thing at a time. E.g., introduce small soft lumps to a familiar food rather than introducing a new taste and new texture all at once.
- Try offering a small serving of the new food at the beginning of the meal when your baby is hungry. If your baby is sick, only a small amount is going to come up. You could try offering the new texture alongside a food your baby already enjoys, giving one spoon of the new food and then a spoon of the food your baby already enjoys.

- Let your baby explore. It is helpful to let your baby touch and play with their food. This might get messy but is an important part of learning. It is important that your baby sees food and eating as fun and enjoyable.



- Your baby might be finding it hard to take lumpy textures from a spoon. Try putting a small amount onto a plate in front of your baby. Your baby may find it easier to pick up and eat some of the food using their fingers. This helps your baby to feel in control. When spoon feeding, let your baby hold their own spoon too.
- When you are feeding your baby with a spoon, you might want to try placing the spoon to the side of the mouth. This encourages your baby to move their tongue around which is important as they develop chewing skills.
- Be patient and keep trying. Your baby might need to try a new food lots of times before accepting it. Do not try new foods when your baby is tired and when you are in a rush. You need to have time to keep calm and to make it fun.
- Always supervise your baby when they are eating. This is to make sure they are safe when swallowing food.

Still worried?



After you have tried the tips in this leaflet, if you think you need further help/support, please discuss this with a health care professional such as your Health Visitor. If you think that your child is having difficulty swallowing, please contact a member of the Speech and Language Therapy team on 01633 431615 to discuss this further.

Further Useful Information:

How to introduce solid foods: <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>

What to do if your baby is choking - First Aid Training - St John Ambulance:

<https://youtu.be/oswDpwzbAV8>

**“This information leaflet is also available in Welsh”
“Mae'r daflen wybodaeth hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg”**