

Start4Life Behaviours

30th October 2009

mum's milk

Why mums milk is better for both mum and baby

every day counts

How each day of mum's milk makes a difference to your baby's health

no rush to mush

Find out the 3 signs that together show your baby is ready to start on solid foods

taste for life

How giving your baby a variety of food now, may stop them turning into a fussy eater later

sweet as they are

How to avoid giving your baby a sweet tooth

baby moves

Why it's important for all little ones to be lively and active

mum's milk

Why mum's milk is better for both mum and baby



And many many more.....

Formula milk
None of the above



A good start for a healthier life

Why mums are the real baby milk experts

When it comes to making baby milk – mums are the real experts.

That's because your milk is perfectly and uniquely made for your baby's growing needs. In fact, giving your milk to your baby makes a big difference to both your baby's and your own health.

Formula milk is made from a combination of cow's milk and other added ingredients, but it does not contain the ingredients that only your body can make to protect your baby. In fact, despite years of effort and lots of money spent trying to unlock the secret of mum's milk, formula milk still hasn't come close.

There is lots of help and support available to you to help get you going with breastfeeding – just ask your midwife or health visitor for details, or read on.

A very special recipe

Mum's milk is packed full of disease-fighting antibodies to help protect babies from getting sick:

- After baby has been looked after inside you for 9 months, mum's milk continues to protect your baby by giving them a special infection fighting boost in the first few days after they are born. This special booster milk is called 'colostrum' and it can't be found anywhere else
- For as long as you give your baby your milk, you give them the extra ability to fight any germs either you or they have picked up. In fact mum's milk changes daily, weekly and monthly to meet your baby's growing needs

Babies who are breastfed have a smaller chance of:

- Developing eczema
- Getting ear, chest and tummy bugs and have to go to hospital as a result
- Being fussy about new foods
- Being constipated
- Being obese which means they are less likely to develop diabetes when they are older

There are lots of advantages for mums who breastfeed too:

- Breastfeeding lowers the risk of mum getting breast and ovarian cancer
- Breastfeeding naturally uses up about 500 extra calories a day so mums who breastfeed often find it easier to lose their pregnancy weight
- It saves money - formula feeding can cost as much as £45 a month
- It's a lot less hassle - there is no need to clean and sterilise bottles, boil kettles and wait for the milk to cool every few hours during the day and night

So lots of good reasons to give it a go!

Getting help

Almost all women are physically able to breastfeed, but just as with any new skill it can take both you and your baby a little while to get the hang of breastfeeding.

Most problems can be overcome with some help in finding the right way of holding and feeding your baby.

If you are starting to breastfeed and are feeling overwhelmed, remember that after about 6 weeks most babies feed less often, take less time to feed and have usually settled into a pattern, so it does get a lot easier.

Just remember that if you are struggling with anything there is lots of help available so keep asking questions until you feel comfortable with breastfeeding.

And if you want someone else to help out with the feeding sometimes, remember that you can express your milk.

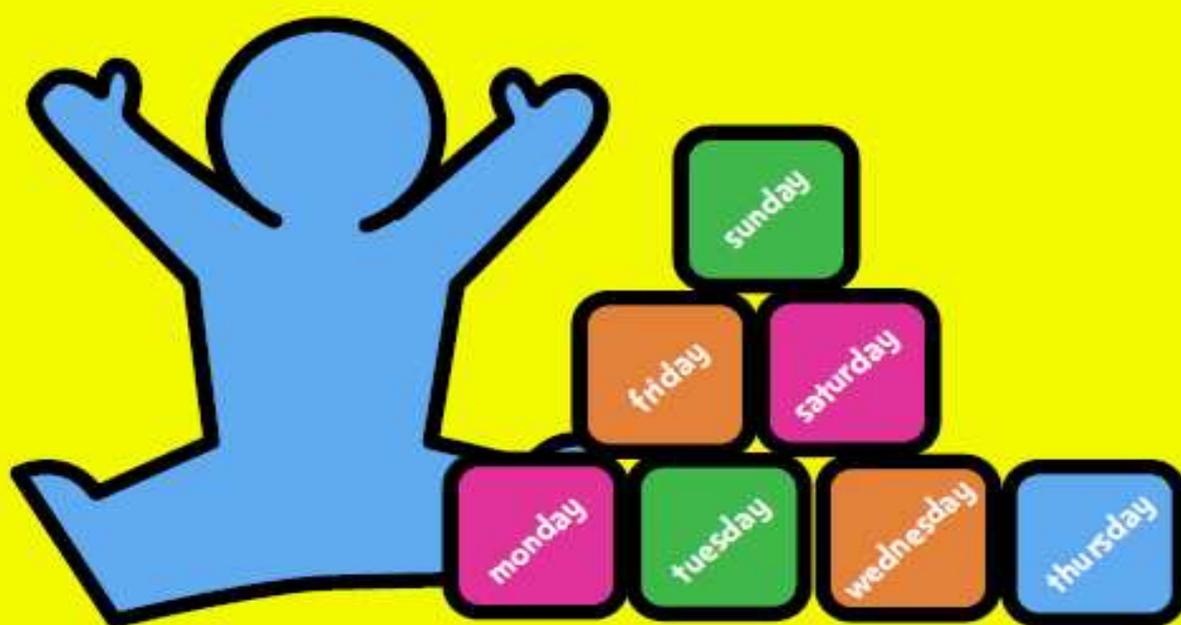
Read over the page to find out where to get help...

Getting help

- Your health visitor or midwife are there to help so if you are having any difficulties or worries, make sure you call them straight away.
- If you find it difficult getting time with them, call the National Breastfeeding helpline on 0300 100 0212 – lines are open 9.30am till 9.30pm. A trained volunteer mother in your area (who will be able to give local help and information, including details of your nearest breastfeeding group) will answer your call.
- Breastfeeding groups can be a great source of support, allowing you to talk through the ups and downs of breastfeeding with other mums experiencing the same thing. Remember, no problem is too small – if something is worrying you, the chances are that other mothers will have felt the same way!
- If you have access to the internet, the Start4Life website has lots of tips from mums and experts.
- Your health visitor or midwife can help answer questions you have with formula feeding too.
- Or read on to find out lots of tips and advice.

every day counts

How each day of mum's milk makes a difference to your baby's health



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A good start for a healthier life

How each day of mum's milk makes a difference to your baby's health

The latest scientific research shows that each day and week that you continue to breastfeed builds up to protect your baby against infections, and strengthens their ability to fight disease.

And each month of breastfeeding lowers the risk of illnesses that can put babies in hospital.

Mum's milk also helps protect babies against becoming overweight or obese, which means they are less likely to develop diseases like diabetes in the future.

Even though formula milk is an OK food for babies, it does not have these benefits. That's because it is not uniquely made for *your* baby.

The longer you give your baby mum's milk the more they benefit. Giving them only mum's milk for about 6 months, then along with other solid foods after that, is ideal.

And if you express your milk, other people can help with the feeding too. Read on to find out more, and for information on where to get help.

Useful tips

- Breastfeeding is a great time to get closer to your baby, and its also a great chance to sit down and relax which is important for new mums. So grab a magazine or book, have a natter on the phone, or watch something good on TV.
- Once you get the hang of breastfeeding you can express your milk so that other people can feed your baby. This can give you a break, involve other people like Dad, or grandparents, and means you can carry on giving your baby mum's milk if you need to go back to work. Milk can be expressed by hand or with a simple pump. As with anything new, it can take a bit of time to get the hang of, just remember if you are struggling there are people who are trained and skilled and there to help you.
- Breastfeeding mums give their baby lots of liquid, so breastfeeding can make you feel thirsty. Make sure you always have some water next to you when you breastfeed.
- And remember – if you have any questions, or are struggling with breastfeeding there are people who are trained and skilled and there to help you. Ask your midwife or health care professional, call the National Breastfeeding helpline on 0300 100 0212, or visit the Start4Life website.

no rush to mush

Find out the 3 signs that together show
your baby is ready to start on solid foods



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A good start for a healthier life

Find out the 3 signs that together show your baby is ready to start on solid foods

Research shows that starting solid food at the right time is important for your baby's health. But some parents start feeding their baby solid food before their baby is ready. Often this is because they misinterpret the signs. Just because baby looks interested in food, is feeding more frequently or is waking in the night, does not mean they are ready for solids.

However, there are 3 clear signs which show your baby is ready for solid food. Your baby is ready if they can:

1. Stay in a sitting position and are able to hold their head steady
2. Co-ordinate their eyes, hands and mouth – so be able to look at food, grab it, and put it in their mouths all by themselves
3. Swallow their food (babies who are not ready will often push their food back out, so get more around their faces than they do in their mouths!)

These signs tend to appear together at around 6 months – rarely much earlier. The important thing to remember is that if they are ready for solid food all 3 signs will be there.

Try the banana challenge - if your baby is able to sit up with their head steady, reach out and grab a finger-sized piece of peeled, ripe banana and eat some of it all by themselves, they are ready!

Why it's best not to give your baby solid food till they are ready

Research now shows that feeding your baby solid food before they are ready (they are ready at around 6 months) could lead to your baby getting upset tummies.

This is because babies are developing on the inside as well as the outside, and although we can't see it, it takes about 6 months for a baby's digestive system to work properly, and be able to cope well with solid food. Plus, if you feed them breast milk up to and beyond 6 months it gives them even more protection against infections.

Some baby foods may have 'from 4 months' on the label, but it's important to remember that this information is based on outdated research.

If you are thinking about introducing your baby to solid food, remember to look out for the three signs that they are ready first.

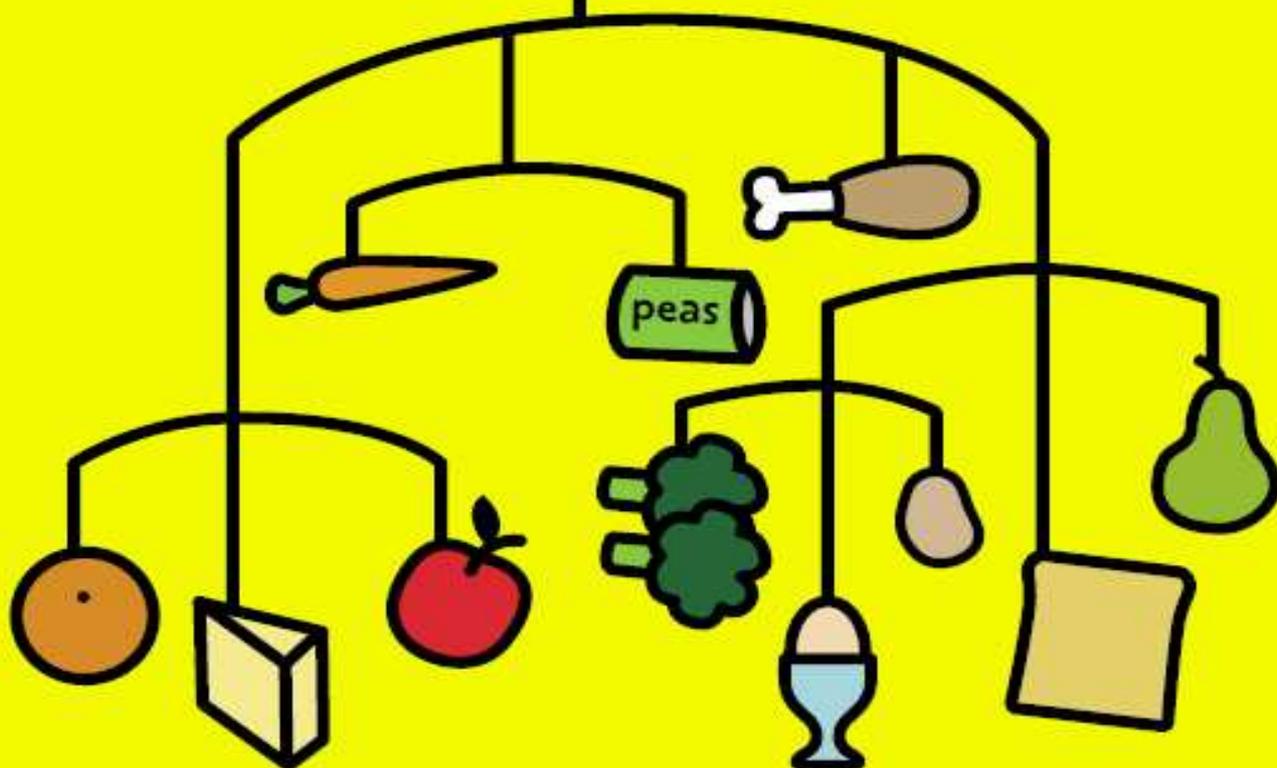
Top tips

- Don't worry if your baby begins waking in the night when they have previously slept through. They might be having a hungry spell (although it could be for other reasons e.g. teething), but extra milk is all they need until they are ready for solids.
- And don't worry about having enough milk if you are breastfeeding. Just feed your baby when they are hungry and your body will make more milk to keep up.
- Waiting till your baby is ready means they will very quickly be able to feed themselves (and with less mess too as they will be able to swallow properly), which means you won't have to spend as much time spoon feeding them.
- If they are about 6 months old and have completed the banana challenge, read 'taste for life' for lots of helpful tips on what and how much food baby needs for the best start in life.

And remember, always stay with your baby when they are eating.

taste for life

How giving your baby a variety of food now, may stop them turning into a fussy eater later



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A good start for a healthier life

How giving your baby a variety of healthier foods now can help stop them turning into a fussy eater later

Babies like the foods they get used to.

If you give babies very salty or sweet food and drink when they are little, then they will get used to these tastes and are likely to find healthier food bland in comparison.

On the other hand if you give them lots of different, healthy foods to try when they are babies and toddlers, they are more likely to eat a variety of healthy foods as they grow up.

It's much easier to give your baby a taste for healthy food now, than to try and change what they eat when they are older, so give them a taste for life when they are a baby by following our simple steps...

The 'Taste for life' timeline: First foods first!

Once your baby is about 6 months, and has passed the Banana Challenge (see 'no rush to mush'), they are ready to start eating solid foods. Here's a time line which shows what sort of foods to give your baby at the different stages of their development.



The 'Taste for life' time line: 1 year on

MILK

12 months onwards

At 12 months you can give full fat cow's milk as a drink (although you can add cow's milk to food before 12 months)

2 years onwards

You can introduce semi-skimmed milk from two years of age, provided your child is a good eater and growing well. Skimmed milk doesn't contain enough fat so is not recommended for children under 5.

You can give skimmed milk as a drink from 5 years of age

MEALS and SNACKS

By now your baby can fit in with the family by eating three meals a day (chop the food if required), but will also need healthy snacks between meals as well as 2-3 cups of milk each day.

Avoid snacks with lots of added sugar. Your baby should be starting to use a spoon themselves and keep offering healthy snacks/finger foods such as vegetables, bread or pieces of pasta, potato, meat or fish to encourage them to be independent eaters. Remember that babies need full fat milk and dairy products until they are 2 years old because they need the extra fat and vitamins in full fat dairy products.

5 years onwards

By now your kids should be eating the same foods as the family, as long as these are healthy! You can introduce whole nuts from 5 years of age. Why not check out [Change4Life](#) to get more healthy tips!

Top tips

Demmmmmmmmonstrate

Babies copy their parents, so you can help them by showing them that you like eating lots of different healthy foods too.

3rd time lucky (or 4th, or 5th...)

Don't be put off if it takes a while for your baby to like something – it really is worth the effort. Babies like familiar foods, and sometimes you need to offer a food 10 – 15 times before your baby will like it. Just letting them look, feel and smell something new will help them to get used to it, and when they are ready, they'll be happy to eat it. If you offer them some of your healthy food, or freeze batches of home made food in ice cube trays (and reheat the amount you need) then it means you don't need to worry about waste either.

Finger feeds

It's a good idea to allow your baby to feed themselves using their fingers. This way they can show you how much they want to eat, and it gets them familiar with the different types of food.

From 7-8 months, babies can be given soft finger foods like peeled cooked fruit, cooked veg, pasta boiled potato or hard boiled egg. From about 9 – 10 months, babies will be able to hold and chew raw fruit and veg, breadsticks, toast, pieces of meat or fish. Always give them small bits at a time, and make sure you stay with them when they are eating to make sure they don't choke.

What's In A Week (Not In A Day)

It's natural for parents to worry about whether baby is getting enough food – especially if their baby refuses to eat sometimes. The trick is not to worry about what your baby eats in a day, or if they don't eat everything in a meal, instead you need to think about what they eat in a week.

Tiny Tums

The size of a person's stomach is relative to their age and height – as a baby's stomach is only about the size of their clenched fist, they can only take small amounts.

Babies know when they are full up, so it's also important not to try and make them eat when they don't want to. Doing this can turn eating into a stressful experience for both of you, and can make them feel full and uncomfortable. It may be better to give them smaller but more frequent meals instead.

More Top Tips

Jars just sometimes

Baby food in jars or packets can be a handy way to feed a baby, but they taste pretty similar and often have the same texture. This means that babies get used to food tasting the same which makes it more difficult to get them to try different foods. It's a good idea to keep jars in the cupboard for when you don't have much time or are out and about (although don't forget to check the label for added sugar), but try to offer them healthy home made food as much as you can. And remember, if you do give them a jar you don't need to give your baby the whole lot – set some aside and see how they get on.

Made from scratch

The best food for babies is food that is homemade from simple ingredients with no added sugar or salt. That way you can know exactly what your baby is eating. Making food for a baby can be very easy and it also works out cheaper than jars. You can also save time, money and waste by freezing batches of home made food in an ice cube tray for later feeds.

Salt free

Salt is damaging for babies' bodies so it's important to make sure none has been added to your baby's food. Foods like stock cubes and gravy can contain lots of salt so may not be suitable. And although cheese and baked beans have lots of good stuff in them, they can also be quite salty (even if you go for low salt baked beans) so try not to give your baby too much. Don't forget, if your baby is trying some of your meal, make sure you haven't added any salt.

Sugar free

Eating and drinking sugary things when they are little could lead to tooth decay even in babies. They don't need added sugar so it's best to avoid giving it.

Things to watch

Sweet drinks

Squash, fizzy drinks, flavoured water, milkshakes, and even some fruit juices can have lots of sugar added in. Avoid giving your baby a sweet tooth (and getting tooth decay), and keep them sweet as they are.

Sweet foods

Chocolate, sweets, rusks, biscuits, cakes and pastries can have lots of sugar and fat too. They can encourage a sweet tooth which can lead to tooth decay when first teeth start coming through.

Salt and salty foods

Chips, crisps, fried food, convenience food, fast food and take away food can contain lots of salt which is bad for babies' little bodies. Stock cubes and gravy also contain lots of salt so it's best to avoid giving these too. It's a good idea to avoid using salt in your cooking so your baby can share your food.

Choking

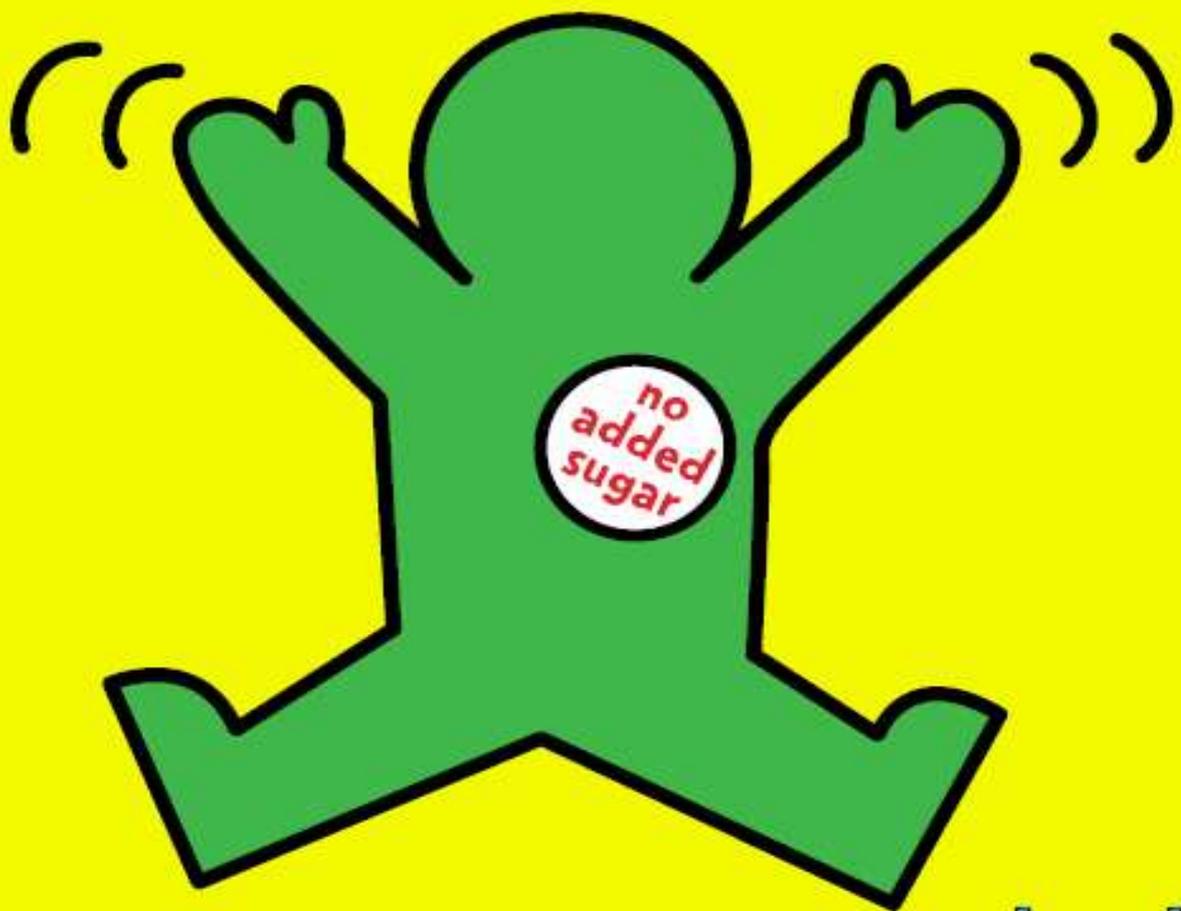
Always stay with your baby or child when they are eating to make sure they do not choke. Be careful with hard foods, bones, small round foods (like grapes and cherry tomatoes), whole nuts and foods with skin (like sausages).

And finally...

If you, having spoken to your doctor or health visitor, choose to introduce solid foods before 6 months, you should avoid giving your baby wheat, nuts, seeds, liver, eggs, fish and shellfish, and soft unpasteurised cheese before 6 months. And honey and cow's milk as a drink should not be introduced before 1 year. Whole nuts should not be given before 5 years as they may cause choking.

sweet as they are

How to avoid giving your baby a sweet tooth



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A good start for a healthier life

How to avoid giving your baby a sweet tooth

Babies who are given sweet things to eat or drink are more likely to get a taste for sweet stuff than babies who are not. In fact, giving babies stuff with added sugar can cause these serious problems:

1. It can rot their tiny teeth, and lead to fillings and even lost teeth (drinks with added sugar are particularly bad for babies teeth – it's like giving a baby a lolly to suck on all day).
2. It can put them at a higher risk of becoming overweight or obese, which can lead to type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers in later life.
3. Giving your baby a sweet tooth also means that they are more likely to keep pestering and crying for sugary things. This makes it difficult to say 'no' to – but means that your baby learns that crying and pestering will get them what they want.

You can help your baby avoid getting a sweet tooth by not giving them too much sugary stuff e.g. giving water with food rather than sugary drinks. If you want to reward them, why not take them to the park or have a play in the garden. But if you do want to give them some food as a reward, it's a good idea to let them think of healthy things instead of sugary stuff e.g. fruit (fresh or frozen), toast and breadsticks.

It's much easier to get your baby on the right track now than to try and change what they eat later.

Read on to find out about sneaky sugars and how to avoid them, and to get lots of ideas of healthy snacks...

Healthy Snacks

Instead Of...	...Try
Chocolate bars	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canned fruit – toddlers love peach, pear, pineapple slices in their own juice – and you don't have to worry about waste• Fresh fruit – look out for fruit that's in season, it's cheaper! E.g. piece of apple• Yoghurt – make sure it's unsweetened, and then add fruit for a delicious snack or pudding• Frozen yoghurt – make sure it's unsweetened• Frozen fruit – defrost slices of fruit and veg e.g. carrots• Rice pudding• Porridge• Baked fruit – put apples, pears and rhubarb into a dish and bake them for about 30mins – serve with yoghurt. Delicious• Stewed fruit – gently heat up some fruit in a saucepan with a little water or squeezed orange juice – but don't add sugar. Serve with yoghurt.• Bread rolls or toasted bread• Dry cereal – but not sugar coated• Bread sticks• Potato cakes• Bagels• Rice Cakes
Sweets	
Biscuits	
Cakes	
Pastries	
Ice cream	
Sugared or toffee popcorn	
Crisps	

Sneaky sugars

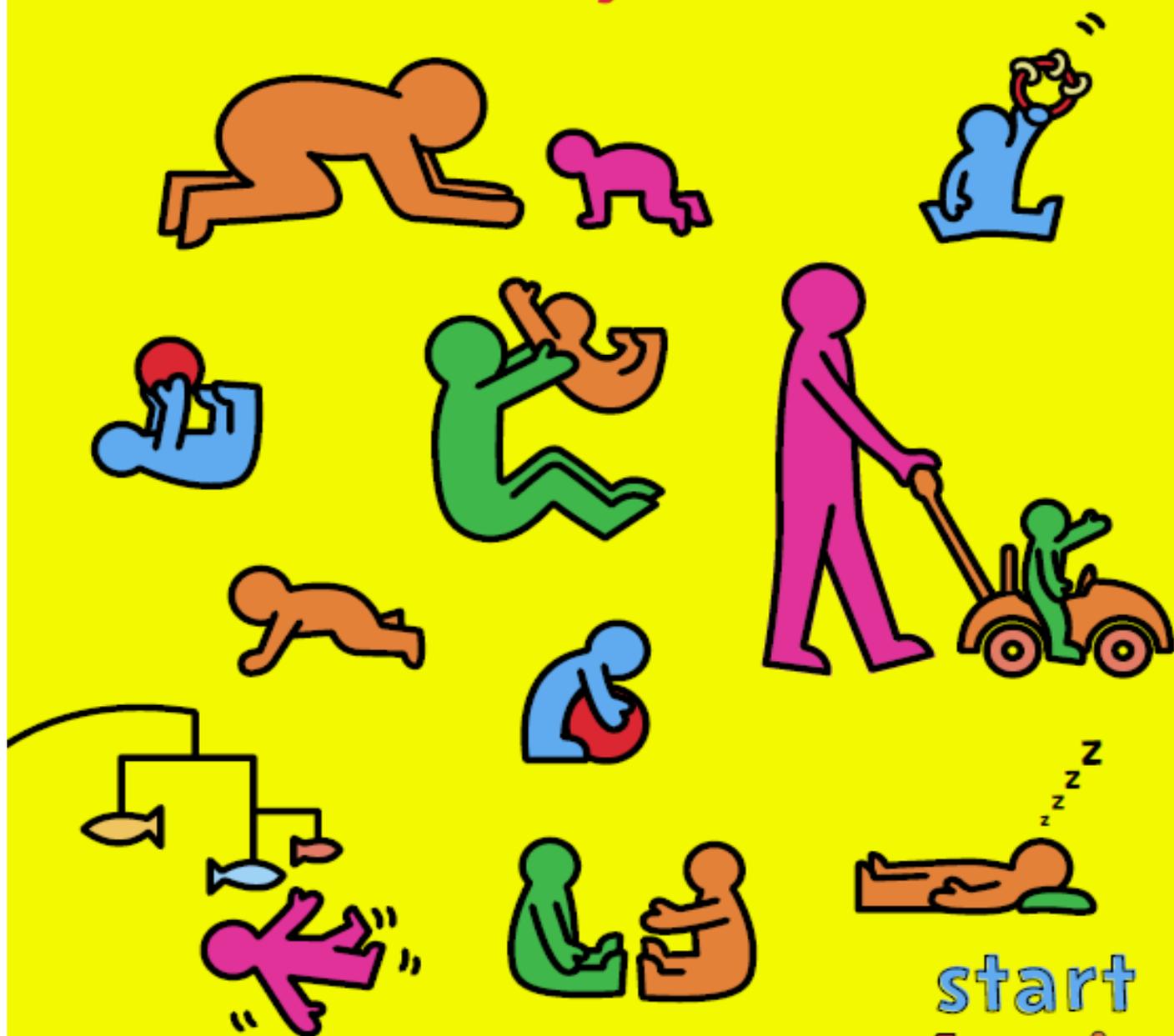
Some sugars are found in obvious places – like fizzy drinks or squash, sweets, cakes, biscuits, pastries and chocolate. But some are found in food and drinks that many people think are healthy, so keep an eye on the sugar content of food and drink you give to the kids.

Foods like rusks, dried fruit, baked beans, some baby food, and drinks like sweetened fruit juice, cordial, milk shakes and flavoured water can actually contain lots of sugar. Unsweetened fruit juice is a healthier option when diluted, but better served with a meal as it is still high in sugar.

Research shows that it is best to give them milk (although not cow's milk as a drink until 12 months) and water to drink, and things like fruit, toast, breadsticks and rice cakes instead of sugary snacks.

baby moves

Why it's important for all little ones
to be lively and active



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A good start for a healthier life

Why it's important for all little ones to be lively and active

Being active takes brain and muscle power so it plays an important part in your baby's development.

Babies love moving about but they can't always do it on their own. As they grow, you can help them by playing with them and helping them do new movements and explore their surroundings. Most of all you can help them by making sure they can move around freely, easily and safely.

In fact, the more chance they get to play by: kicking their legs; reaching out; pulling and pushing; crawling; toddling; walking; jumping; running and climbing, the happier they will be, and the more likely they will be to enjoy keeping active as they grow up. Playing with your baby is also a great chance to bond, and like adults, babies burn energy by moving around so (you never know) it might help them to sleep too!

Research shows that babies who are inactive for too often, and for too long, do not have as much opportunity to develop as active babies, so it's important not to keep them in a pram or rocker for too long. What's more, if they get used to being inactive, it may cause them problems with their weight in the future.

So remember – a lively, active baby is a healthy baby.

Ideas For Active Play

Here are some of the things that babies just love to do with mum, dad and other playmates:

Cuddles and wiggles

Even very little babies can be active! Getting them out of their cot or rocker for a cuddle or a game of peek-a-boo is a great way of getting them to interact and move their muscles. They also love to kick their legs and wiggle about so make sure they have enough space when they lie down.

Singing/ talking

Babies love being sung or talked to, in fact they just love being with you. Spending time with your baby is an important part of their development. So sing a song or nursery rhyme, clap their hands or rock them to the rhythm.

Playing

Whether it's with toys, mum, dad, or friends, any form of play is a good way for babies to interact and be active, even when they are tiny. You can find out what's going on for parents and babies at your local leisure centre, or why not take them for a play in the park or your local swimming pool. And if they are too little, playing at bath time, or just wriggling around on the floor is great fun, and good for them.

Crawling about

It's the first time your baby has the chance to explore, and the living room is an exciting place to be. Make some space for them to explore their surroundings safely.

Toddling around

Practice makes perfect, and it's an important part of growing up, so it's good to try and make sure your baby is free to have a toddle when they get the urge (although make sure they are away from the stairs). Or instead of always using their push chair, why not let them toddle along for a bit.

Things to watch

Baby moves make for a happy, healthy baby, so it's important to make sure they are free to move their bodies. Here are some things to watch out for:

Baby signs

Babies like moving about, but sometimes they can't. They might be strapped in to a rocker or push chair, or perhaps their clothes are too small or big, making it difficult for them to move around. Even little dresses can make it difficult to move about. Watch out for your baby looking fidgety, and give them some room to move around - remember, they don't need to be strapped in all the time.

TV

Babies that watch too much TV will get less chance to be active, so try and reduce their time in front of the telly, encourage them to be active instead.

Rockers

Rockers are useful for busy mums. But babies who are strapped into rockers don't get the freedom to move around properly. It's fine to use rockers sometimes, but making a safe space for them to explore or wriggle around instead will keep babies happy and healthy - do stay with your baby though to make sure they are safe.