

Solid Food

***A picture guide to spoon feeding and
baby-led weaning***



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Feeding baby is an adventure – no matter how you start. This quick picture reference is designed to give you an overview of different textures for spoon feeding, as well as a few samples of food for baby-led weaning.

Spoon Feeding - Moving Up Through the Textures

There are several textures to move through if you start baby with smooth purees. These initially correspond to jarred baby foods "stage 1" and "stage 2." "Stage 3" baby food, however, is thought by many to actually be hard for babies and it's not a simple progression up from "stage 2." It's more of a soup-y texture that some babies are ready for, but many, many babies skip entirely. They come back to that feel later, with real food.

Here's a description of different levels of homemade food:



Smooth puree: this is the initial texture for spoon feeding. The food is thin and totally smooth. Sometimes it's passed through a sieve or screen to make sure there are no lumps. Equivalent to Stage 1 jarred foods.



Strained food: These foods are also very smooth, with no lumps. Stage 2 jarred foods are strained. Two foods may be combined together into one puree, and they're a little thicker than Stage 1 foods.



Thickened puree: These foods are in a smooth puree, but not so thin and watery. Some babies find thicker purees easier to eat because they don't automatically slide down the throat. These can be made by blending foods alone or in combination. Soft boiled egg yolk has this texture on its own.



Fork Mashed foods: Soft foods that can be mashed. Mashed banana, avocado, squash, and sweet potato are examples of this. They can be mashed with liquid to thin them a bit if baby still needs that.



Textured soft foods: These foods have some texture and feel but still don't require chewing. Cottage cheese is a good example of this.



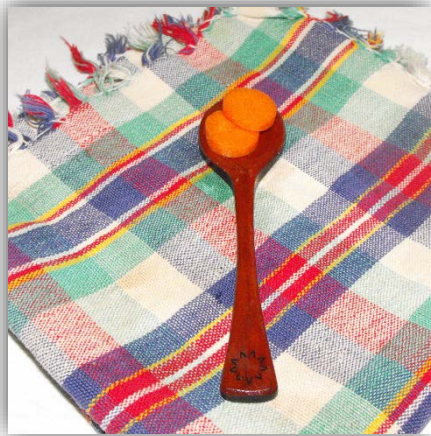
Lumpy solids: Food that has been mashed roughly and may have some liquid. Lumps are uneven. Homemade applesauce is often like this. Finely ground meat is another example.



Easy to chew solids: Foods that require a little chewing, but are soft, and easy. Soft cheese, cooked tuna, and cooked chicken are good examples. Sashimi and tartare are also in this category. Many fruits fall into this category.



Combination food: This is the equivalent of Stage 3 baby food. Foods of one or more consistency are in these dishes. Some babies are pros at this right away, while others find it more challenging. An un-pureed soup is an example - the soup liquid along with lumps of vegetable or meat. Yogurt with fruit lumps is another example.



Chewy Foods: These foods require a lot of chewing and are more difficult to eat. As with combination foods, many babies tackle these with no problem, which others find them more challenging. Examples are steak, lamb or pork chops, raw carrots and apples, etc.

Baby-Led Weaning - Sized for Little Fists

Baby-led weaning means putting your baby in the driver's seat. You offer your baby good-sized chunks of food that he or she can pick up and literally sink his or her teeth (or gums!) into. Your baby develops the ability to swallow, then to take bites, then to pick up food – so by the time your baby is picking up and putting things into his or her mouth, baby is pretty good at chewing and swallowing it down. Big chunks are easier for your baby to pick up and chew and/or suck on – chunks about the size of your baby's fist are just right. Even meats are best in chunks that can be sucked initially. As baby masters food, meats can be offered grated or ground.

