

Weaning Policy

We will support and advise parents in the introduction of solid foods and follow government guidelines.

We embrace parent wishes when using the 'child led' weaning approach and continue this while their child is with us. We work alongside parents who **must** keep us up to date and informed of any changes.

Most babies, by the age of 6 months are ready to start to add solid food to their diet, as they need more iron and nutrients than milk alone can provide.

Starting Weaning

Food is normally bland to start with, usually baby rice mixed with breast or formula milk – introduced in very small 'taster' amounts, using sterilised utensils. Milk is still their main source of nutrition. We will then start and offer pureed vegetables / fruit, introducing different food every couple of weeks in the beginning.

Once fruit and vegetable have been established in the diet, full fat cow's milk products can be introduced e.g. yoghurt, custard, cheese sauce. Alongside fruit we will offer rice pudding and semolina

The Centre follows a pescatarian menu. All food is prepared on the premises and is low in sugar and salt in line with our Food and Nutrition Policy.

We recognise that all children are individuals, some start trying solid food earlier, others later, some are choosy, and others like everything and anything.

Solid food is offered at lunchtime, with children relaxed on a knee, or in a cradle chair eventually moving into a chair which is around the table with their peers.

Following the NHS guidelines for weaning we will also introduce a free flow beaker at to help your baby learn how to sip which is better for your baby's teeth.

The sterilization of all equipment used to feed babies less than one year is vital to their health. Bright Beginnings manages and implements this practice.

We aim to work with parents offering similar foods, portions and time of day to establish weaning. Gradually offering a variety of food and introducing a pattern / routine of three meals a day (two with us here – if full day) with a drink at each mealtime. As baby eats more solid food, his or her milk intake will start to decrease.

6 – 9 Months

We will introduce the majority of new food such as pasta, bread, fish etc. Our aim is by the time the child is 6 months the baby will be eating food from the general nursery menu and can experience even more tastes. We will then make the food a little more textured / lumpier which helps learning to chew. Initially using a hand held blender to puree food, then slightly blending, mashing by hand. Finger foods will be offered, to promote chewing, such as toast, bread, breadsticks, pitta bread, pieces of banana etc. It is vitally important to develop this action as chewing helps develop jaw muscles. These are then used to help pronunciation and the formation of sounds and words. Once children can manage finger foods we will reduce the type of pureed food offered at tea time.

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9 – 12 Months

Babies are given one or two spoons to help assist in self-help skills as they try to feed themselves. Your baby is now usually ready to sit at the table so it becomes more of a social occasion for everyone. By 12 months we are trying to discourage bottles and start to solely use a beaker cup. We find by that time that many children are ready to begin or have already weaned themselves off the bottle. We also encourage children to have full fat cow's milk (or an alternative if the child cannot have cow's milk) as their main drink, after their first birthday.

We work very closely with parents' wishes and children will move on to the complete Centre pescatarian menu as and when they are ready.

Meals within the Centre:

Light Breakfast - Available from 8.00am until 9.15am

This is a light breakfast of either cereals with milk served with water or brown or white toast served with milk. It is expected that you would provide your child with some breakfast prior to arriving at the Centre if they attended a morning session

Lunch - Served at 11.30am - A balanced and nutritious 2 course meal served with fresh water.

Light Tea - Served at 2.45pm -A balanced and nutritious two course light tea served with fresh water. It is expected you will provide your child with a further meal or supper after leaving the Centre at the end of the Centre day.

Useful information around weaning can be found at;

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/solid-foods-weaning/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/>

This Policy was adopted on	11 th July 2017
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