



Finger Foods

Offer From 6 Months

From 6 months of age your baby should be ready for finger food. You should offer finger foods whether you are doing baby-led weaning or traditional purées. Finger foods can be offered alongside purée.

The Importance of Finger Foods

- Development of muscles for speech
- Familiarity with the texture and appearance of foods
- Gives baby some control over eating
- Development of motor skills and coordination

If your baby refuses finger foods, it's important to still offer increased texture from 6-7 months onwards and not rely on mush for too long. Plus keep on trying with finger foods.

Safe Finger Foods

- Soft ripe fruits and veggies for young babies. First finger foods should be soft enough to squish between your thumb and index finger
- Remove all skins, pips and stones and take care of stringy bits (for example on green beans)
- With small round foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes ensure you cut them up small for babies and then lengthways once they are a bit older
- The pincer grip develops at around 9-10 months so start by offering your baby bigger sticks of finger food before you give smaller foods
- Avoid chunks of hard apple, raw carrot, nuts and popcorn, as these are the foods that babies are most likely to choke on
- Always stay with your baby when they are eating
- Wash raw fruits and veggies thoroughly
- Don't add any salt/sugar for Babies

Progressing with Types of Finger Food

Once babies have mastered soft veggies and fruits you can move onto soft cooked meats* and fish* (meatballs and fishcakes are handy here) and lentil* or bean* burgers, omelettes* or hard boiled egg* cut into strips and then carbohydrate-based finger foods like lightly cooked toast, pasta, noodles, chapatti, pitta bread, pancake fingers, breadsticks, oatcakes (the latter 2 around 10-12 months).



Iron-rich finger foods

*These foods are sources of iron that is important from 6 months and if your baby isn't eating these foods as finger foods it's important to give them puréed or chopped foods to suit your baby's needs but keep trying with the finger foods.



Meatballs



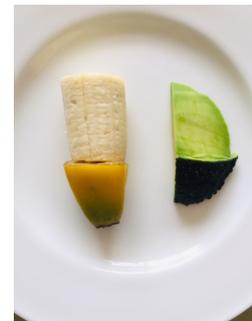
Fishcake



Omelette

Tips:

1. Keep some skin on for slippery fruits and veggies like banana and avocado to help your baby to grip (see photo) But stay close to ensure they don't eat the skin. You could also cut a groove into fingers of food to help your baby grip or make them crinkle cut using a crinkle cut slicer.
2. Offer finger foods about the size of an adult finger where possible (large enough for your baby to grip and for the food to stick up out of their hand to chew).



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About me: Sarah is a registered dietitian and mum to 2 little girls. She qualified in 2006 and specialises in baby and child nutrition with a focus on weaning and fussy eating in particular. She provides 1-2-1 sessions as well as workshops. Get in touch for a free chat (details above).