

Foods to avoid giving your infant

Salt

Babies and children under 5 years shouldn't eat much salt as it isn't good for their kidneys. Don't add salt to their food and don't use stock cubes or gravy as they're often high in salt. Remember this when you're cooking for the family if you plan to give the same food to your child.

Sugar

Babies and infants do not need sugar. By avoiding sugary snacks and drinks, you'll help to prevent tooth decay. Use mashed banana to sweeten food if necessary.

Honey (babies 0-12 months)

Occasionally, honey contains bacteria which can produce toxins in a baby's intestines, leading to a very serious illness (infant botulism). It's best not to give your child honey until they're one year old. Honey is a sugar, so avoiding it will also help to prevent tooth decay.

Nuts

Whole nuts, including peanuts, shouldn't be given to children under five years old as they can choke on them. As long as there's no history of food allergies or other allergies in your family you can give your baby peanuts once they're six months old as long as they're crushed or ground into peanut butter.

Low-fat foods

Fat is an important source of calories and some vitamins for babies and young children. It's better for babies and young children under two to have full-fat milk, yoghurt and cheese rather than low-fat varieties.

Saturated fat

Don't give your child too many foods that are high in saturated or 'bad' fat, such as crisps, chips, cheap burgers and cakes.

Shark, swordfish and marlin (babies 0-12 months)

Don't give your baby shark, swordfish or marlin. The amount of mercury in these fish can affect a baby's growing nervous system.

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Raw shellfish

Raw shellfish can increase the risk of food poisoning so it's best not to give it to children under 5 years.

Eggs

Eggs can be given to babies over six months old, but always make sure they're cooked until both the white and yolk are solid.

Unpasteurised milk or mould-ripened cheese

Avoid giving your child unpasteurised milk, milk drinks or cheese as well as mould-ripened cheese (such as Brie or Camembert) or soft blue veined cheese (such as danish blue) as these may cause food poisoning in young children.

Rice milk

Rice milk is not recommended as it has been found to contain small amounts of arsenic.



Ready made meals and takeaways

Avoid off-the-shelf ready meals or snack foods and takeaways as these are often high in sugar, salt and saturated fat.

Soft drinks such as squash, fizzy drinks, energy drinks, flavoured water, tea, coffee

These drinks contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value. Avoid drinks labelled "no added sugar", "sugar free" or "reduced sugar".

Tea, coffee or other drinks containing caffeine may disturb your child's sleep, behaviour and affect concentration. Tea and coffee also contain tannins which can interfere with your child's ability to absorb iron.

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