

Fresh and Easy – Homemade Baby Foods

Who: Parents of infants between 4 months - 1 year

Why: To emphasize homemade baby foods as a convenient, economic & nutritious option

Time: 20 minutes

Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will:

- Identify developmental signs infant is ready for solids
- Identify reason why some parents may opt to make homemade baby foods
- Identify steps of making and serving fresh baby foods safely

Lesson

Overview:

1. Introduction
2. Concept: Recommendations for when to start solids
3. Concept: reasons why some parents choose to make Homemade Baby Foods
4. Concept: How to prepare baby foods
6. Closing

Materials: Handouts: “Home-Prepared Baby Foods”
DVD “How to Make Baby Food”

Introduction

- Arrange chairs in a semi-circle before participants enter classroom
- Welcome Participants
- Give overview of class session
- Introductions

Introduction Example: “Good morning everybody! Welcome to our class about homemade baby foods! Today we are going to talk about the developmental signs infants will show when they are ready for solids, how to prepare homemade baby foods and ideas to safely prepare them. The class is about 20 minutes. Let’s introduce ourselves. If you would like please share how old your infant is and if they are already eating solid foods what seems to be their favorite solid at this point”.

 Before showing video advice that addition of salt, sugar or spices is not recommended in baby food.

- Show DVD starting video at 2:00 minutes ending video at 4:23 seconds (when pediatrician is finished talking) also show video from 12:09 minutes – 17:45 minutes (this portion shows making sweet potatoes, end video before Creating Medley’s)

Concept: Developmental Signs Your Infant is Ready for Solids

- Essential Question:

- “What are some developmental signs your infant will demonstrate to show they are ready for solids?”
- **Affirm answers from participants (i.e. “yes”, “that is very true”, “that’s a good one”, etc)**



Readiness for Solids:

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and WIC recommends starting solids at 6 months of age when infant shows all signs of readiness.

- Holds head steady
- ▣ Can sit with support
- ▣ Can keep food in his mouth – does not push it out with tongue
- ▣ Closes mouth around spoon

Concept: Benefits to Homemade Baby Foods

- **Essential Questions:**
 - “What do you feel are benefits to making homemade baby foods?”
- **Listen and affirm participants answers**
- **If participant voices negatives points to homemade baby foods such as extra time for preparation make sure to address those concerns. (i.e. does anyone else feel that time could be an issue? etc) or**
- **Summarize** – for example: It sounds like a concern is time and that is understandable. Does anyone see making food in bulk and freezing it as a way to save time in the long run? Discuss comments from group.
 - Does anyone want to share their experience with making homemade foods?



Benefits:

Although there were some challenges mentioned let’s highlight some of the benefits

- Inexpensive/cost savings
- ▣ Fresh and nutritious
- ▣ No additives or preservatives
- ▣ Greater variety of foods
- ▣ Control over what your baby eats and how it was prepared
- ▣ Opportunity to make in bulk and freeze

Concept: How to prepare baby foods at home

- **Essential Question:**
 - “What questions do you have about appropriate first foods or preparation methods?”
 - **Provide handout** “Home Prepared baby Food”
 - **Affirm – for example;** “Thank you for asking that question.....”



How to prepare baby food:

- Rice cereal is recommended as the first food as it is least likely to cause allergies after that you no longer need to start certain foods at specific ages. Go from smooth to mashed to chopped to tiny pieces. Offering one new food at a time.
- Refer to handout regarding tips on making fruits and veggies. Preparation steps can be reviewed.
 - Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables can be used, avoid canned as they may contain large amounts of salt or sugar.
 - Refer to handout regarding homemade meats.
 - Avoiding homemade spinach, beets, turnips, carrots and collard greens as they may contain nitrates. High levels of nitrates can be harmful to infants. Jarred versions of these foods are safe.



A word about nitrates:

Nitrates are naturally occurring in some vegetables such as green beans, carrots, squash, spinach, beets, turnips, and collard greens. High levels of nitrates in an infant's diet can lead to a condition known as "blue baby" or methemoglobinemia.

Nitrates in the blood combine with hemoglobin which reduces the ability of blood to carry oxygen. This causes babies with nitrate poisoning to turn blue as the infant is being asphyxiated due to lack of oxygen in their blood. Parents should seek prompt medical attention.

Infants younger than 6 months of age are most susceptible to nitrate poisoning as the acid in their stomachs isn't acidic enough to control the growth of bacteria involved in the nitrate poisoning process.

Commercially jarred baby foods are tested for nitrates, which makes them a safe way of feeding the vegetables listed above to infants.

👉 Also note that the addition of salt, sugar or spices is not necessary. Salt as sodium is naturally occurring in foods, the addition of sugar can later lead to overweight or obesity. Your infant is already experiencing the sensation of new textures and flavors thus additional spices are not needed.

- **Acknowledge that making baby foods at home may not be for everyone. Ask participants if they plan to experiment with homemade baby foods and congratulate them for their efforts!**
- **Thank them for their participation**

NOTE: Currently the Fresh Baby kits and DVD are only available in English. This same class can be done in Spanish by hosting a facilitated discussion around the 3 essential questions in the lesson plan without viewing a video the class facilitator should be familiar with the content of the video.