

Weaning your infant onto solids when they have had a bone marrow transplant (BMT): information for families

Weaning is the introduction of solid food into your baby's diet. This is also known as complimentary feeding. Weaning is usually recommended at four to six months of age but in many cases, babies will show that they are ready for solid foods depending on their development. This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) describes how to approach weaning when your baby has had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant (BMT/SCT).

Signs that your baby is ready to start weaning include:

- Good head, neck and trunk control
- Interest in food at meal times, when family members eat such as grabbing at food and watching family members eat
- Putting hands and toys in mouth

General weaning advice

Common foods to start weaning include:

- Pureed fruit and vegetables (home-made or bought)
- Baby rice or cereals

You can introduce protein sources and common "allergen" foods from the start of weaning as long as given in the age-appropriate consistency and one at a time.

You can offer puree one to three times a day before a milk feed to support interest in food.

Remember it can take up to 15 tries of a particular item before a child knows if they like it or not so don't be discouraged if your baby rejects a certain food initially.

The foods not to introduce before one year of age are:

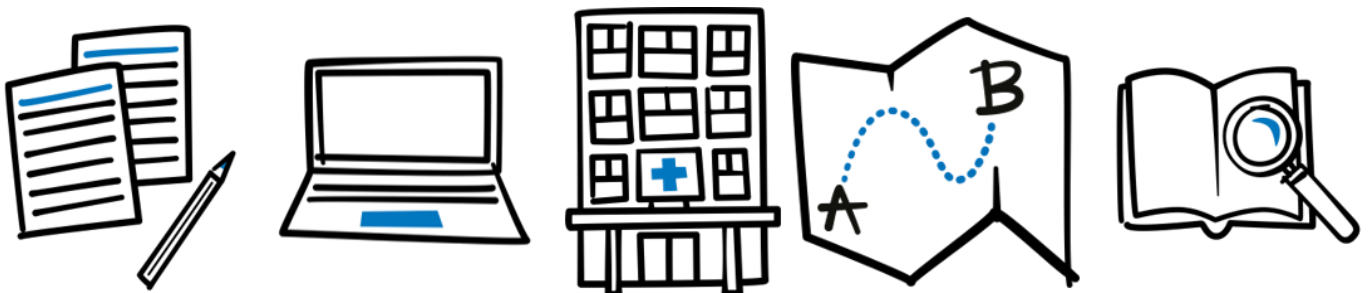
- Honey
- Cow's milk as the main drink – you can introduce other dairy products

You should avoid the following foods until five years old, as they can be a choking hazard:

- Whole nuts
- Whole grapes
- Other whole round or chunks of food

Increasing the range of solid foods for your baby

It can vary with each child based on how they are developing. Medical interventions can also delay the process. As a general time line:



- 7 to 8 months: foods with lumpier textures
- 9 to 10 months: soft finger foods
- 10 to 12 months: finger foods.

If your child is on an age-appropriate oral diet, you can look to move from formula to full fat cow's milk (or an appropriate milk alternative if they are dairy-free). They can have around three cups per day if they are not managing other dairy/calcium sources in the diet

When your baby has had a stem cell transplant

Food safety is important during a hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT). Food carries fungi and bacteria which are usually harmless. However, during your child's treatment, they will become immunocompromised and are therefore more vulnerable to infection so it is important to have stricter food safety guidelines.

If you start weaning in hospital

- The hospital provides normal textured food, pureed fruit and veg and a selection of puree jars.
- Food and purees **cannot** be prepared at home and brought in for your child.
- Once a packaged food item is opened, it should be eaten within 4 hours, at which point it will need to be discarded. This includes wafers or bite and dissolve weaning snacks.
- Having items of food in individual packaging can help reduce waste.
- If a food item is heated or chilled when on the ward, it is only then suitable for eating

for 45 minutes. After this, it will need to be discarded.

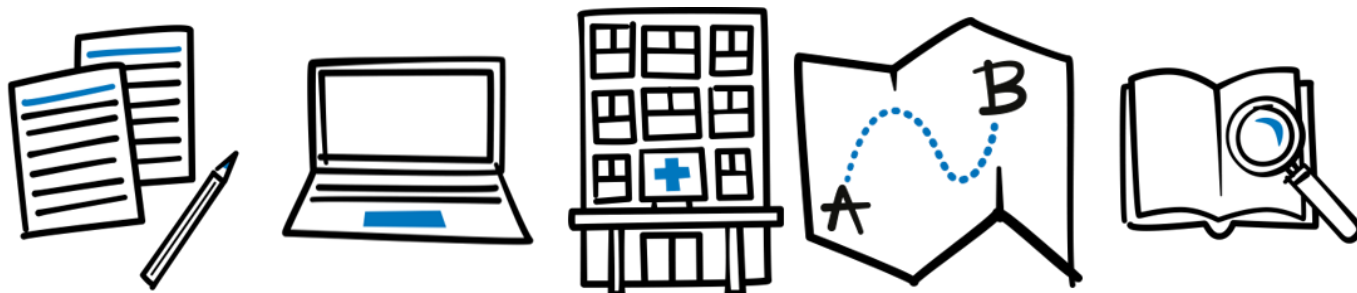
- Purees in either a jar or pouch can be eaten up to 45 minutes after opening. Any puree still left after this period must be discarded. The opened packet cannot then be stored in the fridge on the ward.

If you start weaning at home after the transplant

- Ambient food (foods that are stored at room temperature) can be opened and stored as per manufacturers' guidance.
- Foods requiring heating or chilling would need to be consumed within the 45 minutes time frame after serving.
- Foods that have been open can be stored in the fridge as per manufacturers' guidance.
- Portion out the amount that needs heating and keep the rest of the item in the fridge for the recommended time frame on the packaging.

For example, when opening a puree jar, you can take out some of the puree and heat it for your child to eat and keep the remainder of unheated puree in the jar in the fridge for the recommended time frame on the label.

- Foods can be fresh, frozen or tinned
- Once heated, frozen food cannot be reheated.



Suitable and unsuitable foods for weaning

Some foods are unsuitable for weaning when your baby has had a transplant. Further information is available in the *Feeding my child through BMT* booklet.

Suitable foods	Foods to avoid
Formula	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">All shop-bought formula in jars or pouches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Formula containing probiotics
Purees	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">All shop-bought brands of suitable textureHome-made pureed meat, egg or fish when cooked through	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Home-made puree of under-cooked foods
Snacks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">CrackersWafersPeeled fruit or vegetable sticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Nuts and seeds
Dairy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pasteurised or UHT milkNon-bio or active yoghurts such as Muller or SkiGreek yoghurt or lassi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Probiotic or 'active' yoghurtsProbiotic drinks
Fruit and vegetables	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Good quality unblemished fruit and vegetablesCooked and/or peeled fruit and vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Damaged or overripe fruit and vegetablesUnpeeled fruit and vegetables

Further information and support

General information about weaning is available from Start 4 Life (<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>) and the British Dietetic Association (<https://www.bda.uk.com/> and search for 'weaning')

Please note: This information sheet should only be used under the supervision of a medical professional and may not be suitable for every child. Although every care is taken when compiling this information sheet, manufacturers may alter ingredients of foods and drinks without warning. You should always check the ingredients label. This information sheet may include brand names but in many cases, alternatives (including supermarket own brands) may be suitable. Including specific products in this information sheet does not mean we are recommending them.

