

# Baby-Led Weaning

A natural way to raise happy, independent eaters.

## What is Baby-Led Weaning (BLW)?

- Baby is offered whole pieces of finger food and uses their hand to bring food to their mouth as a way to start solid foods.
  - Alternative to traditional spoon-feeding and purees.
  - Continue breastfeeding or formula feeding.
- Baby explores food placed in front of them and decides what and how much to eat.
- Baby sits with family and is offered same or similar foods.



## When and How to Start Safely

When:

Baby shows readiness, usually around six months of age.

- Baby is interested in food.
- Baby can sit unassisted (not slumped).
- Baby stops pushing objects out of their mouth with their tongue.

How:

- Baby sits upright in a safe chair.
- Give appropriate foods for baby's age/stage
  - Small, easy to grab pieces.
  - Soft enough to mash between fingers.
- Give a few foods at a time.
- Offer 1-2 oz. of water in a cup between bites.
- NEVER leave baby alone with food.

## Benefits

- Promotes family mealtime.
- Introduces different textures and flavors.
- Reduces picky eating.
- Easier transition to table food.
- Encourages fresh, whole foods.
- Develops hunger and fullness cues.

## Gagging or Choking?

Know the difference:

- Gagging is spluttering, coughing, and spitting food out - yet able to move air and food around.
- Choking is when something is stuck in the airway and needs immediate attention.

Avoid foods like hot dogs, candy, nuts, seeds, popcorn, whole grapes, apples, dried fruit like raisins, raw vegetables like carrots, and chunks of nut butters.

## Safe Food Ideas



Infant Cereal: Baked into muffins and pancakes, rolled on fruits, thicken jarred purees.



Infant Purees: Mixed in smoothies, pasta sauce or yogurt, or spread on toast.



Fruits and Vegetables: Steamed or roasted carrots, squash and potato wedges, or sliced tomatoes, bananas, peaches, melons, kiwis and oranges.



Protein: Meat (meatballs, meatloaf, stewed/shredded meat) and boneless fish (sardines, tuna, fish cakes, baked filet).



Other: Eggs, tofu, beans, yogurt, cottage cheese, shredded or sliced cheese, hummus.