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The Simple Steps To Delicious Home-Made Baby Food

By Nancy Miller

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There's nothing very difficult about cooking for your baby. It just requires a little extra care and attention in the preparation of the ingredients.

Here's the basic procedure:

1. PREPARE YOURSELF

Always wash your hands with soap and hot water and dry them with a clean towel before you start cooking. Likewise, carefully wash your equipment (blender, pots, bottles, etc.) before use.

2. PREPARE THE FOOD

Always wash, peel and dice fruit and vegetables before cooking. If there are any seeds/stones, remove them.

If you're preparing meat, cut away all the fat before cooking. Once cooked, cut the meat into very small pieces and remove any bone or other hard bits.

If you're preparing fish, remove any fat, bones and other hard bits before cooking. Once cooked, crumble it into small pieces and remove any remaining traces of bone and skin.

3. COOKING THE FOOD

With the exception of avocados and bananas, all fruits and vegetables must be cooked before giving them to your baby (until he's at least 10 months of age).

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Fruit and vegetables can be steam-cooked, boiled, or micro-waved. Some fruits like apple or pear can also be oven-cooked.

Steam-cooking is the best option because it retains the most nutrients. If you don't have a steam-cooker, don't worry, boiling or micro-waving is fine. Keep the water to a minimum and try to strike a balance between not over-cooking (to retain the maximum amount of nutrients) and not under-cooking (to make digestion easier).

NOTE: Beet, carrots, turnip and spinach should always be boiled (as opposed to steam-cooked or micro-waved) because they contain potentially harmful nitrates which are largely removed during the boiling.

Meats and fish can be cooked in any manner you like (steam-cooked, boiled, micro-waved, etc.). Just be sure that they're well cooked and that you remove all fat bits and hard bits before serving. (If frying or roasting meat or fish, try to avoid adding fat – or keep it to a bare minimum).

Don't add any salt, fat or sugar to your baby's food. It isn't necessary.

4. SERVING THE FOOD

Use a food blender (or a mashing fork) to mix the food to the right texture for your baby.

If he/she is just starting out with solids, then the food should be completely 'liquified' and added in small quantities to his/her bottle. As your baby matures, you'll begin feeding him/her directly with a spoon. Gradually make the food slightly thicker and slightly chunkier (beginning with 'chunks' no bigger than a grain of salt). Give your baby time to adjust at every stage of the progression.

If you have cooking water, you can add some to the food to smoothen it or make it less dry (except for carrots, spinach, beets and turnip -- use fresh water or milk instead).

Remember that your baby's mouth is much more sensitive to

heat than yours. His/her food should be warm, not hot.

IN CONCLUSION...

Really, the two most important points to bear in mind when cooking for your baby are: (1) Make sure that he/she is able to comfortably deal with the texture of the food, and (2) Avoid preparing foods that are inappropriate for his/her age.

Everything else is just plain old cooking.

Nancy.

Nancy Miller is author of 'How to Make Your Own Healthy Baby Food' and a full-time working mom. Visit Nancy's website at <http://www.healthy-baby-food.com>

Five Reasons For Preparing Your Own Baby Food

By Nancy Miller

Here are 5 good reasons to start preparing your own baby food, as opposed to buying it in the store.

IT'S HEALTHIER AND MORE NUTRITIOUS Commercial baby foods contain additional fat, salt, sugar, fillers or other ingredients that are completely unnecessary (and often inappropriate) to your baby's diet. These additives are an attempt to add flavor, texture and bulk to poor-quality products. They contribute nothing at all to your baby's health or well-being. By preparing the food yourself, you can be sure that your baby is getting exactly what his/her little body needs – and nothing that it doesn't.

YOU'RE IN CONTROL By preparing your baby's food yourself, you know exactly what your baby is eating. When you prepare an apple sauce, you know he/she is getting fresh, pure apple and all the goodness it contains. However, when you buy apple-sauce at the store, you'd almost need a degree in nutrition just to decipher the list of ingredients.

IT'S EASY Once you get started cooking for your baby, you'll quickly realize just how easy it is. All you need is a food blender and some fresh ingredients to quickly prepare healthy, tasty, home-made meals for your little one. Furthermore, by making large amounts of his/her favorite meals in advance, and then freezing them for later, you'll be able to serve up delicious, healthy meals in minutes -- every day of the week.

IT'S MUCH CHEAPER The prices that baby food manufacturers charge for their products is nothing short of scandalous and are in no way justifiable. The reason they can charge so much is because they've conditioned most parents to believe that they have no choice but to buy from them. By preparing your baby's food yourself, you can avoid being a victim of this daylight robbery, and find yourself with extra cash to spend on all those other things that a growing baby needs.

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IT'S VERY GRATIFYING Watching your baby enjoy the meal you've just prepared for him/her is already a very gratifying experience. On top of that, however, you have the satisfaction and pride of knowing that you're giving your child the gift of a healthy and nutritious diet – and saving yourself money as well.

And finally...

If all that weren't enough, here's another great reason to do it yourself: home-made baby food is much tastier than any commercial product. Delicious food is one of life's great pleasures and your baby deserves to enjoy the rich flavor and texture of real home cooking just as much as you or I. After all, none of us would enjoy eating 'TV Dinners' morning, noon and night – and that goes for your baby too!

So, don't put it off. Get started today. Your baby will thank you for it in more ways than one.

Nancy.

Nancy Miller is author of 'How to Make Your Own Healthy Baby Food' and a full-time working mom. Visit Nancy's website at

Five Reasons For Preparing Your Own Baby Food
The 6 Key Points to Preparing Your Own Baby Food
The Facts About Organic Baby Food
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