

*Children under 12 months of age should be provided with a variety of suitable meals at age appropriate textures.*

*Key points to consider when feeding children under 12 months are as follows:*

- Infants should commence solid foods at around 6 months of age and not before 4 months of age.
- Progressively increase the volume and variety of foods for infants aged 7-12 months.
- Cow's milk should not be given as a drink (i.e. replace formula or breast milk) until after 12 months of age.
- Delayed introduction of solids can lead to an increased risk of iron deficiency anaemia. By the time babies reach around 6 months of age their nutritional requirements are no longer met by breast milk or formula alone. Stores of iron and zinc, which babies are born with, are reduced, therefore iron containing foods such as iron fortified cereals and meat should be introduced as part of babies first solid foods.
- Encourage parents to try new foods with their baby at home before such foods are offered at care. This way you are already aware that the baby can tolerate the foods and a reaction is highly unlikely. If any new foods are offered to babies whilst at care, always check with parents first before offering it.
- By the time babies reach 12 months of age, they should be getting their nutrition from each of the food groups and as such they can be offered the full range of foods available on the menu with some modifications in texture if needed.
- Appropriate growth and development helps indicate adequate intake for individual infants and toddlers. Regular growth checks by a child health professional are recommended.

