

BLISS in a nutshell

1. Start by offering foods that are adult finger-shaped.

Your baby will find food easier to grasp if it is a stick or finger size and shape. Pieces of food should be long enough so that your baby can hold it and there is still some of the food sticking out the top of their closed fist. Check the food is cooked enough by trying a piece yourself – you should be able to squash it on the roof of your mouth with your tongue – if you can't then cook it a bit longer and test again.

2. Always include your baby at meal times just as you would other family members.

Talk to them as they explore and eat their food and have some eye contact. Don't feel you must talk to your baby about everything they eat or make eye contact all the time.



3. Offer a variety of foods from the resources including one energy rich food and one high iron food at each meal. Wherever possible, offer your baby the same foods that the rest of the family is eating, so that he feels part of what is going on. **Offer three or four different foods** at a meal (e.g carrot, beef strip, cheese stick) and **start with one piece of each food**. You can always offer your baby "seconds". Loading up your baby's highchair with all sorts of foods will overwhelm him and there may be a lot of waste.



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4. Avoid hurrying your baby.

Allow her to decide the pace. In particular, don't be tempted to 'help' her by putting things in her mouth for her.



5. Avoid offering 'fast' foods or foods that have added salt or sugar.

6. Always follow the basic safety rules

- Ensure that your baby is supported in an upright position – never leaning back – while he is eating. In the early days you can sit him on your lap, facing the table.
- Don't leave your baby alone with food. Ever!
- DON'T offer foods such as peanuts, popcorn, whole grapes or any food in a coin shape – she may choke.

DON'T Expect:

- Your baby to eat any food on the first few occasions. Once he has discovered that these new toys taste nice, he will begin to suck, chew, and later, to swallow.
- A young baby to eat a **whole** piece of food at first as she won't yet have developed the ability to get at food inside her fist.
- A young baby to have a perfectly "balanced" diet. There may be times when you think she is being a fussy or picky eater. Try to relax and allow your baby to explore foods, as they become more familiar with food and eating their acceptance of new tastes and texture will increase.

Offer your baby food when she's happy and content – following a milk feed for babies until 8-9 months. In the early days it can be tricky coordinating a suitable time for the family meal and when your baby is awake and content. Don't expect this to fall into place immediately but as you progress you'll find a routine that suits all of you.



Babies enjoy variety. Offer different foods or you can serve the same foods in different shapes or forms.

You may find yourself thinking "eat more" or "please eat some veges". It's normal for a parent to want the best for their child but resist putting food in your baby's mouth. Babies are very good at regulating their own appetite so will eat as much as they need. As long as you continue to offer healthy nutritious foods your baby, in time, will learn healthy eating patterns.



Do try rejected foods again later. Sometimes it can take up to ten attempts (at different meals) before your baby accepts a new food.



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Fig. 2 BLISS in a Nutshell