

77



# Nutrition for blooming buds

**N**utrition is a roadmap to good health and requires careful selection of food items and this begins from the birth of the child. Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life is very important not only for the optimum growth of baby but it also has innumerable other benefits, including prevention of allergies in later life and better emotional development.



Dr Sham Bhosale

Beyond six months of age only milk is not sufficient to fulfil the nutritional needs of the growing infant. At this stage the baby needs to be started on certain supplemental food items (complementary feeding) while continuing breastfeeding.

Whenever new foods are introduced in the baby's diet the following points must be kept in mind:

- Only one food should be introduced at a time, say one per week.
- Let the baby recognise and develop taste of that food item by regularly giving it for initial few days.
- Do keep a watch whether the baby is not tolerating any particular food (develops allergic reactions, stomach discomfort and vomiting)
- One should start with a thin consistency (*moongdal-rice kheer* made in water), then progress to semisolids (*kheer* made in milk, thin *upma* etc.) and then solids (dal-rice, chapatti) with advancing age.
- Avoid giving items with very thin consistency (dal pani, rice-water) as it will be lacking in calories and proteins and baby will not gain weight.
- The child should not be force-fed.

**Dr Sham Bhosale,**  
pediatrician

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- Finger foods like boiled carrot, beet-root should be given to the baby rather than teether.
- Bland flavours are better accepted. Do not make food very spicy.
- Lukewarm food should be served.
- After 1 year the child should be eating from the "Family Pot" i.e. the same food the entire family eats but it should be softer and non-spicy.



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