

CHAPTER 15 – SUPPLEMENTARY FOODS

Breast-feeding should be continued till how long? This question is easily answered. Continue until the child can take adequate quantity of regular food. Beyond this continuation of breast-feeding depends on mother's wish and child's nature. Most of mothers in India are housewives and hence we see children being breast feed till the age of 1 to 3 yrs. Mothers who are working wish to stop breast feeding early. Start supplementary foods from 7th month onwards. Before that, they are not required but merely serve to replace breast milk, which leads to reduced immunity in the child.

REMEMBER FOLLOWING “DON'TS ”

- ◆ Do not give ready-made food from the market, e.g. tinned foods or biscuits, etc.
- ◆ Do not give bottle-feeding.
- ◆ Do not satisfy hunger with fruit juices. Do not cook fruits
- ◆ Do not give thin rice water or dal (pulses) water. Give as much dense dal which child can drink
- ◆ Do not use mixer-grinder to make food thinner
- ◆ Do not give tonics to a healthy child.

POINTS TO REMEMBER WHILE STARTING FOOD SUPPLEMENTS:

Give only breast milk until the age of 6 months. Start supplementary foods from 7th month but DO NOT stop breast-feeding. Continue it until 2 years of age. Give nighttime breast-feeds.

When and why?

Around age of 6 to 7 months most of children start playing while breastfeeding, usually during morning. This is the right time to start other foods, when acceptance to it will be high. They breast feed more avidly in the evening or nighttime. Important thing to remember is to avoid bottle-feeding.

How much and how frequently?

Initially start with 1 to 2 feeds a day and gradually increase to 3 to 4 times a day. Frequency can be 5 times after stopping breast-feeding. 6 to 9 month old child can be fed 2 to 3 times and at 12 months 4 to 5 times.

What to give initially?

Food should be thin enough to swallow it easily by the kid. It should not be watery, as nutritive value decreases. Cereals, pulses, vegetables can be boiled and given as soup. Make flour of rice, wheat, bajra or ragi and roast with ghee to which add milk and sugar and give it as Kheer, Lapsi, Sheera, or Halva. Fruit juices are not advisable for filling stomach, as they are low in calories and proteins. Permit only a small serving a day of fruit juices.



☺ While preparing foods, use mother's milk instead of other milks to improve palatability.

When choosing supplementary foods it is necessary to ask oneself:

“Can I satisfy my hunger daily with this food?” If the answer is ‘no’, then do not give such foods. This is applicable to foods like biscuits, readymade tinned foods, and powders.

The second question one should ask is “Is this the consistency of food that I take? This is for foods like dal-rice made to paste in grinder, boiled apple etc.

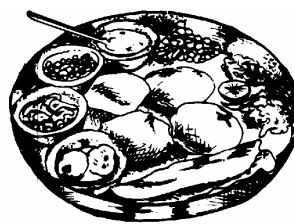
In short, choose food taken by all in the home and which has consistency that the child can swallow.

What to give as age advances?

Gradually make consistency of food solid so that by age of 9 to 10 months child can eat loose ‘sheera’, mashed dal-rice, or khichdi, sago (sabudana) and thick dal. Apart from this give mashed banana, mashed boiled potatoes, cream of milk, curd, papaya, scraped apple, chiku, and other seasonal fruits (not boiled). Finally, give chapatias or puries dipped in milk, bhajiyas (pakoda) softened in curd, and soft vegetables. At the age of 1 year, child should be able to take almost all foods cooked at home.

Introduce variety

It is important to try variety of foods. Depending up on the child's taste sweet (jaggery, sugar), sour (curd, lemon, tomato), salty, spicy (chilies etc) tastes should be used. Change of color, texture, and shape of foods attract children.



Keep patience

Transition from milk to everyday foods is gradual. It depends time and hard work from parents. This needs lots of patience for being successful.

Develop scientific knowledge

A balanced diet should include one or more foods from the following categories: cereals, pulses, vegetables, fruits, milk and milk products, ghee & oil, sugar & jaggery, spices & condiments. Combining various categories increases the nutritive value of foods.

Diet in illness

During the change over child may fall sick or teething may start. Child will take less of other foods and more of breast milk. Mother has to be patient till the illness is cured and child starts eating again.

When and how to stop breast feeding?

Normally child automatically stops breast-feeding, after reducing frequency. Continue breast-feeding in the second year when child take breast milk 2 to 3 times (especially before going to sleep) Continue breast-feeding in the third year, if convenient.

The purpose of breast-feeding is not merely nutrition but also bonding between mother and child. Therefore, it is not possible or desirable to stop suddenly. Sudden stoppage may lead to engorgement of breasts. One of easy solution is to breast feed for exactly one minute. It prevents engorgement and does not stimulate production.

COMMON ISSUES WHILE GIVING / SELECTING FOODS.

Oily & fried food:

Give foods prepared at home in pure oil, which are acceptable to the child. Leave the choice of taste to child's discretion. Sweet (puris, laddoos) or salty (chiwda, khaman, bhajia, pakoda, khandavi, idli dosa etc.) tasting items may be given. They are rich in nutritive value. Preferably, prepare them at home.

Use of mixer-grinder

Mixer is frequently used to make food easy to swallow for the child. Avoid this because later when child is expected to consume routine food, it may not easily accept them, once used to pasty consistency prepared by grinding. Therefore, give food in nearly same consistency that is consumed routinely at home.



Addition of new dishes

Allow child to get used to one preparation over 4 to 6 days. Then new preparation should be introduced.



Hot, spicy food

Do not give highly spicy food until the age of 5 years.

Tea, coffee, chocolates, milk additives

Child does not require tea or coffee. Milk is good for the body but powders added to it do not add any nutrition but only change the taste & color. Tea, coffee, and other powders contain cocoa, chocolate and caffeine to which child may get addicted.



Refined foods

Foods like maida, bread, noodles, biscuits, jam, toast, sauce, spaghetti, wafers, cold drinks, cakes and pastry are to be avoided as they are not good for physical and mental well being in the long run. They contain very little fiber but lot of preservative chemicals, which can be harmful.

Tinned milk and formula feeds

These are milk converted into powder form. Preservatives are added to prevent spoilage. Studies have found high concentration of heavy metals and other harmful chemicals in them. While preparing these foods exact quantity of water should be added otherwise the feed may become too dilute or a load for the kidney.

Fruit juices available in market

Now a day, it is fashionable to give canned fruit juices to children. A single cup of freshly prepared juice (at home) can be given but juices should not satiate child's hunger. Ready-to-serve juices may contain harmful chemicals. Whole fruits are better than fruit juices.



Bottle for feeding:

Do not give milk, water, fruit juice etc by bottle as it increases chances of vomiting, diarrhea, ear infection; caries of tooth etc. Use cup and spoon.

Diet in illness:

Do not stop any food during illness without doctor's advice. Child should be encouraged to eat frequently but not use force.

Foods rich in iron:

Dark green leafy vegetables, dates, raisins, black sesame, moong dal, channa, turmeric contain good amount of iron.

Foods rich in calcium:

Milk and milk products, white sesame (til), green leafy vegetables contain high calcium. Bananas do not contain high calcium.

Milk:

Milk is a good source of high-class protein, vitamin-D, and vitamin-B12. If child does not like milk, give alternatives like paneer, kheer, curd, etc. During first year, use milk as supplementary food and not as replacement of breast-milk. Use undiluted milk along with its cream.

Non-vegetarian food

It can be started in those homes where it is consumed regularly. In the end, current research indicates that non-vegetarian diet leads to heart disease, hypertension, joint problems, cancer, and intestinal problems. Only exception is seafood, which can be considered healthy.



BEHAVIOR RULES TO BE OBSERVED WHILE FEEDING:

- ✓ Give only as much as the child can eat. Do not force. Feed only when hungry.
- ✓ Do not get irritated if child rejects preparation made with efforts.
- ✓ Do not force if any dish is not accepted. Force may make temporary arising dislike for an item permanent. Reintroduce dish after child has forgotten about it. Do not remind child that he used to dislike it previously. Use patience and explanation.
- ✓ Give food according to taste and need of child.
- ✓ Do not 'bribe' to make the child eat (it will become a habit). Do not overfeed for any reason like tiredness, travel, illness, weakness etc.
- ✓ Do not praise or criticize any food.
- ✓ Do not use any tonic for increasing appetite.
- ✓ Remain calm, do not get angry, or show anxiety or eagerness. Child is not aware of time; hence, haste is useless.
- ✓ Preferably, serve food in company of other children. Take opportunity to talk of day's events in calm manner.
- ✓ At age of 8 to 10 months, child will try to feed by itself. Allow child to eat on its own even if there is spillage. The earlier the child learns, the better it is.
- ✓ During teething, sensations arise from gums. For this, give slightly hard foods like carrot or cucumber for child to chew on.
- ✓ Do not worry about quantity of food consumed.

- ✓ Do not compare eating habits with other children.
- ✓ Do not make statements like:
 - “If you do not eat this much or finish that is kept on the plate..... You will not get particular food item.
 - “If you do not eat, I will take back the plate and you will not get food till evening.” Instead, remove the plate quietly
 - “Please at least taste this, you will like it, we all like it”
- ✓ Do not allow snacks shortly before meal times.

Tips for serving

- ✓ Do not fill the plate with food but serve little at a time.
- ✓ Do not ask to refill the plate. Let the child ask (even if it takes a long time to learn to do so).
- ✓ Initially give only those dishes that child likes. Then start any of the dishes that used to be cherished in past. If he does not eat do not say anything but reintroduce later some other day.
- ✓ Do not get irritated if child does not eat or even taste any specially prepared item. If some item is left, do not point out or insist for it to be eaten.
- ✓ Make food appetizing by taste, color, and method of serving or presentation.
- ✓ Be aware of nutritive value of foods.
- ✓ Keep TV, toys and other distracting thing out of sight while eating.