

Introducing solid food the German way

Disclaimer

The following information is a summary of the official German recommendations based on the brochure „Von Anfang an mit Spaß dabei - Essen und Trinken im ersten Lebensjahr“, published by the State Government Baden-Württemberg. Please note that this is just an informal translation and overview and does not claim to be complete or correct. To verify information or to clarify questions please turn to your pediatrician.

- Don't start with solid food before the 5th month as it might overwhelm your baby's body.
- Don't wait longer than the 7th month as breast milk or formula won't supply enough iron and zinc in the second half of the first year anymore
- Trust your baby. It will show you when it is ready for solid food. Indicators are when it is interested in what's on your plate, when it tries to grab your food and when it opens its mouth so that you can give him or her a spoonful. Your baby should be able to sit upright and turn its head away from the food before you start introducing solids.
- In Germany we start with a vegetable-potato-meat-puree. It is full of iron and zinc and thus provides exactly what your baby needs after the first 6 months. This puree is usually served as lunch.
- Vitamin C is important to help the body absorb the iron so it should be part of every lunch. You can for example mix 3-4 teaspoons of apple- or orange juice in the puree or offer your baby fruit puree for dessert.
- In order to help your baby to get used to solid food you should start with introducing just one sort of vegetable at a time and just offer a few spoons. Increase the amount from day to day and introduce other vegetables, then start mixing the vegetables with potatoes and add one tablespoon of oil. Use high quality and organic oil. Rapeseed oil is particularly good but linseed oil, sunflower seed oil or soy oil are also suitable.
- Replace the meat once or twice a week with fish. Salmon, cod and haddock are very healthy for your baby.
- If you are skeptical about introducing meat at such a young age vegetarian alternatives are 10 g millet or oat flakes. They are a good source of iron, too. Add 3-4 tablespoons of apple or orange juice or fruit puree as iron from plant sources is harder to absorb for the body and the vitamin C is very needed. Raising your baby vegan is not recommended.
- Between month 6 and 8 the second puree follows: The official German recommendations state that it is now time to introduce milk-grain-puree as dinner. This is the first time the baby gets introduced to whole milk. It is a good source of calcium, proteins and iodine however you can also use formula or breastmilk for this puree. Fruit is also part of this puree in order to help the body absorb the iron of the grains.
- The third puree is introduced between month 7 and 9 as afternoon-meal. The grain-fruit-puree is prepared without milk.
- Water is introduced with the third puree. 200 ml spread over the day is sufficient until the baby starts eating what you are eating, then the amount should be raised to 600 ml.

Introducing solid food to your baby the German way - recipes

Vegetable-potato-meat-puree

100 g vegetables
50 g potatoes
30 g meat or fish
1 ts oil
3–4 tsp fruit puree or juice

Cut the vegetable, potatoes and meat/fish in small pieces and steam for 10-15 min. Add 1 tablespoon of oil and blend everything. Add water until the consistency is as your baby likes it. Add the fruit puree or juice into the puree or serve the puree as dessert.

Milk-grain-puree

200 ml whole milk (3,5 %–3,8 % fat)
20 g grain (flakes)
20 g fruit puree

Bring the milk to boil and add the grain. Let swell for 3-5 minutes on low heat. Let puree cool down a bit and then add the fruit puree.

Grain-fruit-puree

90 ml water
20 g grain
100 g fruit
1 ts oil

Bring water to boil and add the grain. Let swell for 2-3 minutes on low heat. Let cool down a bit and then add the fruit puree and oil.

Always check the temperature of the puree before you serve it to your baby!