



FEEDING INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

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Infants i.e. children upto one year of age are a most vulnerable group. Feeding in their case, therefore, assumes added importance.

COLOSTRUM

Colostrum (yellowish and sticky liquid secreted by mother immediately after delivery) must not be allowed to go waste but should be fed to new born babies. It is an important source of protein, antibody (i.e., defence against dangerous neonatal infection) and Vitamin A.

BREAST MILK

The babies should be fed on breast milk as long as possible because:

1. It is anti infective.
2. It is a complete food by itself for the first few months.
3. It is a free gift from nature.
4. It does not bring about any deformation in the physical health of the mother.



NO BOTTLE FEEDING

Bottle feeding should never be encouraged. It is unhygienic and can lead to dangerous contamination. In exceptional circumstances when breast milk is not available, cup and spoon, which are easy to clean, should be used for feeding infants.



INTRODUCING SUPPLEMENTARY FOODS

Breast milk alone is sufficient for most infants until 4 to 6 months of age. Thereafter, they need additional foods which are known as 'Complementary Foods' or 'Supplementary Foods'.

These foods complement breast milk and provide extra energy, protein and other nutrients to help babies grow normally.

It is important to remember that Supplementary Foods are not a substitute for breast milk but additional feeding material for infants.

PREPARATION OF SOME SUPPLEMENTARY FOODS FOR INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

1. FROM FAMILY POT

Chapati	—	1
Dal*	—	½ Katori
Subji*	—	1 Karchi
Ghee/Oil	—	1 teaspoon

*without spices

Method:— Separate small amounts of dal and subji before adding spices into it. Soak pieces of one chapati in dal, add subji into it and mix well. Add ghee/oil and feed. For younger infants, pass the mixture through a sieve pressing with a karchi. Adjust the consistency with boiled water, if required. Rice can also be used in place of chapati.

2. FROM ROASTED CEREAL AND PULSE

Wheat	—	1 Kg. (4 parts)
Green gram dal (washed)	—	½ Kg. (2 parts)
Roasted Groundnut/ Til*	—	¼ Kg. (1 part)

* Optional

Method:— Roast wheat and dal separately in hot sand. Remove the red skin of groundnut. Grind all the roasted ingredients and mix well. Store in dry, air-tight containers.

Any cereal or millet and any dal can be used in this preparation.

For feeding, take 3 tablespoons of this instant food in a katori. Make a paste using boiled and slightly cooled water or milk. Add sugar or jaggery. One teaspoon of hot ghee or oil can also be added. Dal water or gravy can also be used to make the paste.

3. THICK CEREAL-PULSE-VEGETABLE SOUP

Rice	—	1 Tablespoon (Approx. 10g.)
Lentil/Washed Green Gram Dal	—	1 Tablespoon (Approx. 10g.)
Potato, Carrot, Tomato	—	1 small each (Approx. 60g.)
Salt	—	To taste
Ghee/Oil	—	1 teaspoon (Approx. 5g.)

Method:— Pick, wash and soak rice and dal for ½ an hour. Peel potato, scrape carrot and chop all the vegetables. Cook rice, dal and vegetables in sufficient water with salt till soft. Pass through a sieve pressing with a karchi to get a thick soup. Add hot ghee or oil and feed.

HOW TO INTRODUCE SUPPLEMENTARY FOODS

- As far as possible, supplementary food should be given after breast feeding.
- Hygienically, it is safer to use a spoon for feeding infants than feeding them by hand.
- To begin with, there should be one helping a day of weaning food. The intake may be increased gradually day by day. When the baby is around 6 months old, he should normally accept complementary meals 2 to 4 times a day.