



BRAIN-BOOSTING superfoods

ENSURE YOUR BABY'S WEANING DIET GIVES HIM THE BEST START IN LIFE WITH OUR GUIDE TO THE ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Weaning is challenging enough for both you and your baby, without having to worry about making sure he's getting all the nutrients and vitamins he needs as well. Relax! We called in our expert to prepare a simple guide to the key ingredients your growing child needs, so you can serve up delicious and brain-boosting meals with ease...

Vital vitamins

If you want to raise a healthy genius with a killer appetite, then, introducing vitamin- and mineral-rich foods early on in the weaning cycle is key. "Breast milk or formula will meet most of your baby's requirements, but once

you begin weaning and his milk intake reduces, you should start offering fresh fruit and vegetables with each meal," says Beverley Glock, children's food expert and author of *500 Baby & Toddler Dishes* (£9.99, splatcooking.net). "Vitamin C not only helps your baby absorb iron and calcium, but is essential for growth, healing wounds and protection against diseases."

Tomatoes, strawberries and sweet potatoes are all good sources of

vitamins and minerals and are flavours that your baby should enjoy. B vitamins will also boost your mini muncher's brainpower and help him maintain good mental health, so make sure you stock up on bananas, peas and fortified breakfast cereals.

DID YOU KNOW?

Recommended daily vitamin C allowances are:
0-6 months 40mg
7-12 months 50mg
and 1-3 years 15mg

Iron wonders

Your baby's brain is constantly working at full power to make sense of the world around him, so it's important to keep his mind and body fuelled with essential nutrients. "Iron is critical for brain power and a lack of it can make your child feel tired, irritable and unable to concentrate," says Beverley. "Lean red meat, green vegetables such as broccoli and beans, plus quinoa, are full of the iron he needs, but just make sure to team them up with something rich in vitamin C to aid absorption."

Protein power

Building a mighty mind requires a helping hand from the protein squad. This vital source of amino acids not only provides the chemicals essential for helping your baby transfer information between brain cells, but will strengthen his visual activity too.



When your child's milk intake is reduced, start offering fresh fruit and vegetables with his meals



PB READER OFFER!

Grab yourself a signed copy of Beverley Glock's 500 Baby & Toddler Dishes book for the special price of just £6.50, including p&p, at splatcooking.net. Just enter WEANING at the checkout

Why not try...

EATING THE RAINBOW?

As important as it is for your child to eat his greens, he also needs to consume his reds, yellow, blues, purples and more in order to have a healthy and varied diet. Using the rainbow as your guide, try to fill your child's plate up with as many colourful and nutritious foods as possible. For example...

- RED Tomatoes
- YELLOW Peppers
- PINK Meat
- GREEN Kale
- ORANGE Sweet potato
- PURPLE Blackberries
- BLUE Blueberries

"Your baby needs a daily supply of protein but can't store it, which is why it's so important to serve it regularly," explains Beverley. "Eggs are tasty, nutritious and great all-round brain food for babies, as long as they're cooked through."

But remember that liquid egg yolk is off the cards until your child is at least 3 – so no cheekily licking cake mix off the spoon! Chicken is also a great protein source and an ideal first meat for your child because it is mild tasting and tender. But try him on the darker leg meat as well as breast, as it is richer in nutrients like iron and zinc.

Fantastic fish

Remember your grandma telling you that eating fish can make you brainy? Well, it's true! "Fish that contains essential fatty acids, like omega 3, are crucial to your baby's brain and

visual development, and, seeing as your baby's brain triples in size in the first year, that's quite important," says Beverley. "Flat fish, such as lemon sole and plaice, are exciting additions to the weaning journey, but stay away from fish that can be high in mercury, such as marlin and swordfish, until your child is much older, as they can potentially cause stomach upsets."

Clever carbohydrates

For peak brain performance, you need to provide your baby with regular sustained energy that can only be found in carbs. "When weaning your child, you need to make sure his diet consists of a certain amount of carbohydrates, such as potatoes, bread, fruit and wholegrains, to fuel him through the day," says Beverley. "But it's important to make sure, before serving anything up, that your baby isn't intolerant or allergic to anything in the dish." It's also advisable to keep sugary foods out of your baby's diet, as these will only encourage a sweet tooth later on.

For more tips and advice on weaning your baby, see

Babyexpert.com