

Advice Briefing

Feeding Advice for Babies and Young Children

There is a lot of advice available to parents and professionals about weaning and in particular baby led weaning. Information and research available around the general development of biting and chewing states the following facts;

Biting Food

- The first tooth usually appears at around six months (but may appear earlier or later). All milk (or first) teeth are usually present by the age of three years. The first teeth are usually the lower front teeth (incisors- at six to ten months), followed by the upper front teeth (eight to 12 months). The side teeth (molars) do not usually appear before the end of the first year.
- Infants can bite hard textured foods, such as a cracker, from the age of around eight months. Feeding behaviours and other motor development in healthy children (2-24 months). However, biting into hard food, such as a piece of raw apple, only begins when both upper and lower front teeth (incisors) have erupted.

Chewing Food

- Chewing requires a combination of lip, tongue and jaw movement. From around six months, after the introduction of lumpy solids, infants can co-ordinate mouth movements; sucking, biting, and up and down munching. This early chewing can develop before the teeth have erupted as the gums are hard from the teeth within them.
- Chewing efficiency develops in when different textured foods are offered, and most infants can cope with lumpy textured foods between six months and one year. Infants who are introduced to these more solid textured foods at around six months will be chewing effectively by twelve months of age and at two years be able to cope with most foods which are offered to them as part of a family meal.

Further Information

- It is important to note that the above information relates to the general population and does not include children who may have additional needs. It is also important to consider the varying amount of supervision that parents/carers can offer their weaning baby and the level of family/community support that parents and carers receive.
- The following links can be shared with teams, colleagues and also parents and carers:
 - Professionals working with families can signpost them to information about weaning [here](#)
 - For information about weaning from the Healthy Child Programme click [here](#)
 - For more information on how to help a choking child click [here](#)