

Safe foods for self-feeding infants: what to offer and what to avoid

Safe, easy foods for baby-led weaning and what to skip. Checklists for readiness signs and choking risks to keep self-feeding stress-free.

A free guide from maternity.app

Watching your baby explore solid foods is exciting (and messy). Here's how to keep self-feeding safe from the first bite.

Start with foods that dissolve easily

- **Cooked sweet potato.** Steam until very soft, then cut into thick sticks.
- **Ripe avocado.** A few thick slices or chunks that are easy to grab.
- **Steamed apples.** Peel and steam until they squish between your fingers.
- **Soft toast strips.** Lightly toasted with no crust for easy gumming.

Avoid these common choking risks

- ☐ Raw apple chunks or carrot sticks
- ☐ Whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, or berries
- ☐ Popcorn or nuts
- ☐ Sticky foods like marshmallows or gummies
- ☐ Hard cheeses cut into cubes
- ☐ Hot dogs or meat chunks
- ☐ Large spoonfuls of nut butter

Cut food into safe shapes

Babies can't grind food until molars come in. Cut everything into finger-length strips or soft, smushable pieces smaller than a dime.

Watch for these signs your baby is ready

- ☐ Sits upright with minimal support
- ☐ Picks up objects and brings them to mouth
- ☐ Shows interest in your food
- ☐ No longer pushes food out with tongue

THE GAG REFLEX IS GOOD

Gagging is normal as babies learn. It moves food forward. Stay calm to avoid scaring them.

You'll be amazed how quickly your baby masters this. Keep mealtimes relaxed and let them explore at their own pace.