**GENERAL Advice for weaning**

1. Weaning starts at 6 months of age.
2. Breast feeding can continue at the same time.
3. Ensure hygiene when preparing food and wash your hands with soap and water.
4. Cooking place and tables should be cleaned and utensils should be washed and dried.
5. Undercooked food is not tasty and overcooked food causes nutrients to be lost.
6. Water should be boiled well and cooled.
7. Food should not be stored outside for more than 2 hours and should be kept covered to keep away insects like cockroaches and flies.
8. Commercially processed foods seem convenient but are NOT superior and cost much more!
9. If a baby vomits or turns pale, he/she may be allergic to a particular food. Do not give it again until the baby is older.
10. Introduce one food at a time and NEVER force feed a child. You can always re-introduce a food later on mixed with some food the baby likes.

6 to 9 months

1. By 6 months, a baby can control sucking and swallowing, and biting movements begin. The tendency to push solids out of the mouth decreases.
2. Start with semi-solid food. It should not be watery. Try a cereal like Suji or fruit like banana. It should be thicker than breast milk, bland in taste and mashed to homogenise.
3. Be prepared to see a baby spit out the food. It does not mean that he or she does not like it.
4. Start with one feed per day and increase gradually to 2-3 times a day over 2-3 weeks. Remember that babies have small stomachs and eat only small amounts.
5. Then gradually increase amount of food. Over 3-4 weeks, increase to 50-60 grams (Half a cup) OR one banana.
6. Cereal based semi-solid food like Ragi is used in South India, Softened Idli or Idiappam, cooked and mashed paruppu dal, Mashed banana, Kichri (rice & Dal), & Moong dal dalia.
7. Try to add green leafy vegetables for Vitamins and Iron.
8. You can add a small amount of vegetable oil to increase energy density
9. Avoid adding salt and sugar before 1 year of age. Avoid spices and chillis.
10. Remember that you can continue to breastfeed.

 9 to 12 months

1. By 9 months, an infant can use the lips to clear a spoon and use the tongue to move food between the teeth. They can start chewing better!
2. Minced, chopped or pounded food can be introduced. The food should have more texture now.
3. Potatoes, carrots and beans can be cooked along with Dal and rice/Daliya.
4. The infant can be given the family diet, sitting at the table along with other family members.
5. The infant should be encouraged to pick up the food and eat.
6. Give 3 feeds a day.
7. Vegetables and seasonal fruits can be added.
8. Non-vegetarians can give fish and minced meat.
9. Remember that you can continue to breastfeed.

 12 to 18 months

1. A child may eat roughly half of what a mother eats
2. Introduce more flavours, colours, textures and shapes to attract him/her
3. 50 grams of green leafy vegetables daily to avoid Vitamin A and Iron deficiency
4. Encourage the child to feed himself/herself
5. Parents should never show dislike for a particular food
6. You can continue breastfeeding

 GOLDEN RULES

1. Relax while feeding your baby.
2. Introduce only one food at a time.
3. Babies who are given homemade family food are more likely to adopt these later.
4. Put the baby’s food in a separate bowl or plate so that you have an idea how much they have eaten.
5. Encourage your child to feed himself/herself.
6. Always show love and affection when feeding a child
7. Feeding should be a pleasurable experience for the child. Don’t shout at them or lose your temper when feeding babies.