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Avoid sweeteners in the baby's food such as sugar and honey because they cause diarrhoea.



COMPLEMENTARY FEEDS FOR BREASTFEEDING BABIES

By Jacqueline Emedek

Health guidelines stipulate that babies should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months. Thereafter, other foods should be introduced, in addition to breastfeeding until the baby is two years. However, after introducing the baby to complementary foods, mothers living with HIV/AIDS are advised to stop breastfeeding.

Complementary feeding

Dr Hellen Namusoke, a paediatrician at Bethany Children's Clinic, says complementary feeding is when a baby is given breast milk in addition to other foods. Introducing complementary feeding marks the beginning of the weaning process and should ideally be done at six months. Namusoke says at six months, breast milk alone is not sufficient for the baby's nutrition needs.

"From six months to one year, breastmilk can provide only half of the nutritional requirements of the baby. So, the other half has to come from the complementary foods. From one to two years, breast milk provides a third of the baby's nutritional needs," Namusoke states.

She notes that weaning should be a slow process and the baby should be introduced to new foods gradually.

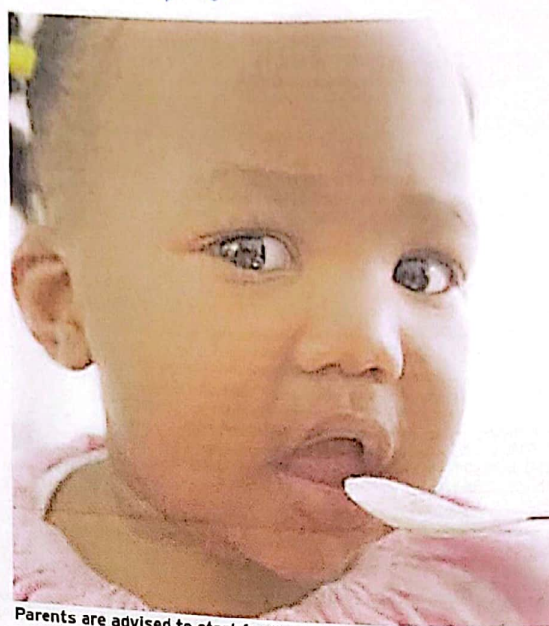
Josette Ssanyu, a public health dietician, says introducing feeds is a gradual process.

"My girl is one year and seven months, but there are foods that she has not yet tasted," Ssanyu says.

She advises parents to prepare emotionally and financially to cater for the feeding adjustments of the baby.

Containers

Namusoke recommends that the containers from which the baby is fed must be appealing to the baby. They should come in bright colours and attractive shapes.



Parents are advised to start feeding babies on semi-liquid foods

Ssanyu advises parents to first introduce the baby to semi-liquid foods such as porridge.

Namusoke advises against introducing a baby to livestock milk in the first week of weaning, saying some babies might not tolerate it. She says it can be introduced in the second week with fruit juice. She warns against giving children citrus fruits, saying they are too acidic and the baby's digestive system might not be able to handle it.

In the third week, the baby can be introduced to vegetables such as pumpkin, blended carrots, mashed matooke and Irish potatoes.

Avoid adding sugars and a lot of salt

to the baby's food because they tend to cause a running stomach.

"It is like putting a solute in the intestines that will cause secretion of water and diarrhoea," Namusoke says.

She adds that if anything you are using for weaning is sweeter than breast milk, the baby will stop breast feeding and yet they still need about 500 to 600ml of breast milk daily.

According to UNICEF, special attention should be given to a child's nutrition needs in the first year because it is a period of growing and the child will be severely affected by malnutrition.

"They need adequacy; they need a lot of protein to put on muscle and

Type of foods and feeding frequency

Parents should consider the element of FATIVAH (frequency, amount, thickness, variety, adequacy and hygiene) when choosing weaning foods.

For frequency, a seven-month-old child should have at least four main meals; breakfast, lunch, a snack in the evening and supper at 8:00pm. In-between, the mothers can breastfeed them.

"Their stomachs are small, so they have to take in little at a time. However, their digestion is quick, so after two hours, the baby is likely to be hungry again," Dr Hellen Namusoke, a paediatrician at Bethany Children's Clinic, explains.

When it comes to amount, the *ekitoobero* (a meal containing all the nutrients to ensure that the baby has a composite of nutrients) is the best feed. Josette Ssanyu, a public health dietician, says *kitoobero*

is usually prepared in the ratio of two proteins to one carbohydrate with a fruit.

The high ratio of proteins to carbohydrates is due to the fact that the baby is growing and needs the proteins to grow their cells, brain, organs and muscles.

So, one can have milk and maize in the ratio of two to one, with milk taking the larger portion. This is age-specific.

Mind the thickness of the foods, for example, the porridge should not run off the spoon, but rather stick to it.

"If it runs off the spoon, it will run through the stomach as well. It is also a fact that the thicker the food, the more nutrients it has," Ssanyu explains.

The variety comes in as the baby grows. One can switch foods and keep introducing new diverse foods so that the child derives nutrients from various foods.

carbohydrates because they are active, fat and minerals for brain development. That is why we would prefer mothers to use the packed porridge because it is fortified with iron, unlike the one got from the grain mill," Ssanyu says.

Preparing meals

Namusoke says according to the food triangle/ pyramid, for a child to grow well, they need 66% carbohydrates, then the rest can be proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals.

However, in our environment, it is rare to find a food that is purely fat or purely protein since most of the foods are carbohydrates with components of

proteins.

"For babies that are less than 10 months, their food should be cooked separately because they are not going to eat the same food as adults, but after 10 months, they eat almost like an adult," Namusoke says.

Breastfeeding should be offered on demand. So when a baby starts weaning, you can start with a feed each day instead of the two-hour breastfeeding pattern.

Avoid sweeteners in the baby's food such as sugar and honey because they cause diarrhoea. Do not fry babies' food and avoid nuts because they are difficult for the baby to digest.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT KEY FACTS ABOUT BREASTFEEDING

NEWBORN CARE AND BREASTFEEDING

A new born baby should be kept close and frequently held, and cuddled by the mother, father and caregivers. Immediate skin-to-skin contact for at least one hour after delivery, provides warmth to the baby and promotes bonding between the mother and child.

Breast milk provides ALL the food and water a baby needs during the first 6 months of life.

Upon delivery, let the baby start suckling when s/he starts showing signs of interest.

Put the baby on the breast immediately after birth, ideally within 30 minutes and at most one hour after birth; this provides the best start for the baby and can save his or her life.



The first thick yellowish milk, also known as colostrum, is very healthy and will help protect your baby from illness. Colostrum is very nutritious and full of antibodies that help protect the baby against infection.

Water or sugar water or any other liquids or fluids are NOT necessary and ARE dangerous. They cause a delay in your milk 'coming in' (or start flowing).

A new born baby should be exclusively breastfed from birth

for six months without anything else including water.

Feed your baby often for short feeding times. Frequent feeding will help your milk to flow over the next few days.

Breastfeed the baby during the day and night as long as the child wants, at least 8 times every 24 hours.

Communication during breastfeeding like singing, caressing, talking, touching, and laughing creates a strong bond between mother and baby.

Important Note

Mothers who are HIV positive should take their anti-retroviral drugs regularly (ARVs) and exclusively breastfeed their babies for 6 months. Giving ARVs to an HIV positive mother can significantly reduce the risk of HIV transmission through breastfeeding and also improve the mother's health.