

Making Baby Food Class

Facilitator's Guide



Background Information

Making Baby Food Classes teach basic cooking skills for preparing healthy baby foods. This document provides information on recipe ideas, short nutrition lessons and activities, and a checklist of what to do before, during and after each class. The key principles for the cooking classes are:

- Providing education on healthy eating for baby's growth and development
- Teaching parents and caregivers basic cooking skills for preparing healthy baby foods
- Having fun while sharing experiences and traditions!



Recipes

A suggestion for your baby food making class would be to consider including:

- One high-iron food recipe (e.g., meat or legume)
- One fruit recipe
- One vegetable recipe
- One pureed recipe
- One minced recipe
- One diced recipe

Below are three recipes you can use for the cooking class. If you need other recipe ideas, check out the First Solid Foods for First Nations Cookbook or be creative!

When planning, adjust for quantity and grocery shop for ingredients and supplies prior to the class. Also, ensure that recipes can be prepared with existing kitchen equipment and utensils at your location and within the time of the class.



Recipe 1: Let's Get Fruity!

The theme for this recipe is fruit! Fruit is easy to use and often does not need to be cooked. Serve fruit in a variety of ways - on its own, or mixed into other foods such as iron-fortified baby cereal or yogurt for a power breakfast!

Ingredients & Equipment

Ingredients

- 2 Large canned peaches (796 ml) packed in juice
- 1 Large tub of Plain yogurt ($\geq 2.5\%$ milk fat)
- 1 Box of iron-fortified oat infant cereal
- Drinkable water (either from a water jug or a water bottle)

Equipment and Supplies

- 6 Metal forks (minimum of 6; includes extra)
- 1 Liquid Measuring cup (can hold 1 cup minimum)
- 1 Can opener
- 1 Mixing spoon
- 1 Blender (optional)
- 4 Medium-large sized bowls
- Food storage containers (e.g., Tupperware)
- Plastic spoons for tasting
- Paper towel rolls

For the Activity: Store-bought baby food

- 2 Baby food labelled as "Dessert" or custard
- 4 Baby food with no added salt/sugar

Directions

1. Drain the canned fruit to remove the excess sugar.
2. Place in a bowl and mash with a fork to the texture that is right for your baby. Use a blender if you want a smooth texture. Serve the fruit as-is, or use some to make Power Yogurt.
3. To make Power Yogurt:

- Mix together 1 cup (250 ml) of fruit, 1 cup of iron-fortified infant cereal, ½ cup of plain yogurt, and ½ cup (125 ml) of water in a microwave-safe bowl.
- Yield: 3 cups.

Activities

1. Tasting store-bought baby food

- For the tasting, dip a clean plastic spoon into the baby food jar or squeeze baby food onto the spoon. Each participant will need a different spoon for each type to avoid contamination.
- Do a taste test to compare store-bought and homemade baby food.
- Open up the discussion, some potential questions can include:
 - What do they think about the different flavors and textures?
 - How did they find making the baby food?
 - Was it harder or easier than what they thought it would be?
 - Is there anything they can think of to make it even easier?

2. Store-bought baby food and label reading

Demonstrate label reading using commercial baby foods with no added sugar/sodium (e.g. fruit, mixed dish) and with added sugar/sodium (e.g. fruit dessert, custard, added fruit juice, infant yogurt snack).

- Can say: “Buying store-bought baby food is an option that you can choose instead of making your own. We understand that making baby food might not work for everyone. If buying store-bought baby food works better for you, reading food labels helps you choose the healthiest options.”
- Ask participants if they know what to look for on a food label. Explain:
 1. Read the front of the package to see what the product is. For example, if the word “dessert” or “custard” is in the title, it has added sugars.
 2. Read the ingredient list – this tells us everything that is in the food item, starting with the ingredient weighs the most and ending with the ingredient that weighs the least. If sugar or salt is listed as the one of the first 2-3 ingredients, this means the food product has a lot of added sugar or salt. As examples:
 - In the baby custard, sugar is the second ingredient.
 - Some baby food has added fruit juice. This is sugar although it can be mistaken for fruit.
 - Two-thirds of store-bought baby foods are sweetened with fruit and this is something to watch for. If the first 3 ingredients are fruit, then the food is mostly fruit and will be quite sweet from natural sugars. Although babies have a preference for sweet tastes, exposure to

bitter or savory foods such as vegetables or meat will help them accept new foods. Try choosing baby food with vegetables or protein in the first few ingredients. If you are using fruit-based baby foods, try adding iron-fortified baby cereal to add more nutrients and to make the food less sweet.

- Here are some other tips if using store-bought baby food:
 - Store-bought baby food will likely not provide all the different textures that babies need. It is important to offer other textures and finger foods when baby is ready.
 - Baby foods are usually mixtures, rather than single foods. This makes it difficult for determining allergies (can sometimes find plain peas, plain banana).
 - Store-bought baby cereal with iron is one product that is recommended to help meet a baby's iron needs.
 - There a lot of baby foods in squeezable packs on the market. To use these, squeeze the food onto a spoon or into a bowl. It is best to avoid putting the nozzle in baby's mouth as this can harm their teeth.
- We can also use label reading when making our baby food:
 - Canned Peaches: The can of peaches is packed in juice. This has less sugar compared to canned peaches packed in syrup. There are fruits packed in water as well, but these use artificial sweeteners. We don't know the safe amount of artificial sweeteners that babies can have, so we recommend choosing fruits packed in juice. Rinsing canned fruit under cold water can help remove some of the sugar.
 - Plain Yogurt: Look at the front of the package for the percentage of milk fat. Does anyone know what % milk fat of yogurt we want to choose for your babies?" (2.5% or more – a higher percentage means more calories for your growing baby).

Background Information

- Sugar may be listed in the ingredient list with one or many names. The following words can all be used to describe sugar: glucose, fructose, maltose, sucrose, cane juice extract, corn syrup (and solids), fruit juice, and evaporated cane juice.



Recipe 2: Have an Edge with Your Veg!

The theme for this recipe is vegetables! Vegetables can be easy to use, for example, a cooked vegetable will mash easily when pressed with the back of a fork. Serve vegetables in a variety of ways - on its own, or mixed into other foods such as meat, legumes, or cheese for a savory meal!

Ingredients & Equipment

Ingredients

4-6	Whole carrots
2-3 cups	Frozen peas
½-1 cup (125 ml-250 ml)	Water

Equipment and Supplies

4-6	Small cutting boards
2-3	Vegetable peelers
4-6	Knives
2-3	Potato mashers
1	Measuring cup (can hold 1 cup)
3-4	Medium-large sized bowls
1-2	Pots
1	Blender
	Food storage containers (e.g., Tupperware)
	Plastic spoons for tasting
	Paper Towel Rolls

Activity: Store-bought baby food (choose no added salt or low sodium)

1-2	Peas, baby food
1-2	Carrots, baby food

Directions

1. Wash the carrots, peel the skin, and cut into chunks.
2. Place vegetables and water in a pot. Alternately, you can use two pots to cook the peas and carrots separately.
3. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low.

4. Simmer until the vegetables are soft, adding more water if needed to prevent scorching. Let cool.
5. Drain any excess liquid.
6. Mash with a fork or potato masher to the texture that is right for your baby. Use a blender if you want a smooth texture; add water for a smoother consistency.

Activities

1. Tasting store-bought baby food

Do a taste test to compare store-bought and homemade baby food.

- For tasting, dip a clean plastic spoon into the baby food jar or squeeze baby food onto the spoon. Each participant will need a different spoon for each type to avoid contamination.
- Start a short discussion with participants. Some potential questions can include:
 - What do they think about the different flavors and textures?
 - How did they find making the baby food?
 - Was it harder or easier than what they thought it would be?
 - Do you have any questions about cooking vegetables for making baby food?

Discuss key messages below for making baby food:

- Baby can eat the same vegetables as the family, but may need extra cooking time to be soft enough. For example, if you are making a chicken stir fry, set aside some of the vegetables for your baby. Cook the vegetables in a little pot with $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch of water until soft for baby.
- Baby does not need added salt (e.g., soy sauce) or sugar (e.g., honey) in food. Start with plain foods first, then gradually add herbs or spices. Added salt or sugar is not healthy for baby and can alter baby's preferences for sweeter or saltier foods, making it harder to accept different flavors.

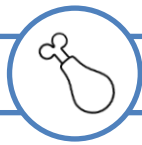
2. Label reading (optional)

Discuss label reading when making our baby food.

- Ask participants if they buy fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables?
- Canned vegetables, like canned peas, green beans or carrots, can be a healthy choice, but choosing low sodium options will be healthier for your baby.

Show participants an example of a food label. Discuss the key messages:

- Nutrition Facts Table – The Nutrition Facts Table is on all prepackaged foods. It has information about the calories and 13 nutrients, including fat, sodium (salt) and sugar. Note the serving size for the amount of each nutrient.
- Percent Daily Value is listed on the right side of the Nutrition Facts Table. The % Daily Value tells us if there is a little or a lot of each nutrient listed. Note:
 - 5% or less is a little
 - 15% or more is a lot
- For sodium, look for a Daily Value of 5% or less
- You could also rinse canned vegetables under cold water to help get rid of some salt on the surface.



Recipe 3: Protein Breakdown!

Foods like meat and legumes are high in protein and iron to meet baby's growth and development. Beans are a low-cost option and they are quick and easy-to-use. Serve iron-rich foods at every meal – try mixing meat or legumes with foods like tomato sauce or pureed vegetables or rice!

Ingredients & Equipment

Ingredients

1	Package of boneless chicken thighs
3-4 cups	Leftover cooking water or drinkable water
1-2 beans	Large cans of beans (28 oz or 540 ml), for example, kidney or black beans

Equipment and Supplies

2	Cutting boards (large)
2	Large knives
3-4	Medium-large sized bowls
2	Large spoons or spatulas
3-4	Metal forks
1-2	Potato Mashers
1	Can Opener
1-2	Blenders
1	Colander
	Plastic spoons for tasting
	Paper towel rolls

For the Activity: Store-bought baby food

2	Meat baby food (choose no added or low salt options)
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Directions

Note: When handling raw meat, ensure you are washing your hands, using a separate knife and cutting board from other foods, and cleaning surfaces well to reduce the risk of contamination.

For the chicken:

1. Remove any excess skin or fat from chicken. Cut chicken into cubes.
2. Place meat and water in pot (for every 2 cups of meat, add 1 cup of water)
3. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low.
4. Simmer for 20 minutes. Chicken is cooked when it reaches an internal temperature of 74°C.
5. Drain the liquid and save it in another container.
6. Puree to the texture that is right for your baby. Add saved water as needed to get the right consistency.

For the beans:

1. Pour the beans into a colander and rinse well under the sink to get rid of any extra salt. Transfer the beans into a clean bowl.
2. For a diced texture, cut beans into halves or thirds. For a puree or mash, use a fork or potato masher until desired consistency is achieved. Optional: for a smoother texture, put beans and water in a pan and boil to soften (takes 3-5 minutes over medium heat) to make it easier to puree or mash.

Activities

Tasting store-bought baby food

Do a taste test to compare store-bought and homemade baby food.

- For tasting, dip a clean plastic spoon into the baby food jar or squeeze baby food onto the spoon. Each participant will need a different spoon for each type to avoid contamination.
- Start a short discussion with participants. Some potential questions can include:
 - What do they think about making baby food?
 - Was it harder or easier than what they thought it would be? Is there anything you could do to make it easier?
 - Do you have any questions about cooking vegetables for making baby food?

Discuss key messages below for making baby food:

- Baby can eat the same food as the family. For example, you could roast a chicken for the family and puree some for baby, but make sure to check for bones, cartilage, etc.

Label reading (optional)

Discuss label reading when making our baby food.

- Ask participants if they buy canned legumes?
- Canned legumes are a healthy choice, but choosing low sodium options will be healthier for your baby.

Show participants an example of a food label. Discuss the key messages:

- Read the front of the package to see look for “low sodium” or “no salt added.”
- Nutrition Facts Table – The Nutrition Facts Table is on all prepackaged foods. It has information about the calories and 13 nutrients, including fat, sodium (salt) and sugar. Note the serving size for the amount of each nutrient.
- Percent Daily Value is listed on the right side of the Nutrition Facts Table. The % Daily Value tells us if there is a little or a lot of each nutrient listed. Note:
 - 5% or less is a little
 - 15% or more is a lot
- For sodium, look for a Daily Value of 5% or less
- If you are using regular canned legumes, rinse them under cold water to remove salt.

Resources

Alberta Health Services Handouts:

Making Baby Food:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-making-baby-food.pdf>

Introduction to Solid Foods:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-starting-solid-foods-around-6-months.pdf>

Label Reading:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-label-reading.pdf>

Food Safety:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-tips-food-safety.pdf>

Nutrition Bites - Beans: A Great Meat Alternative!

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-nb-beans.pdf>

Lentils.org website - Get Started with Lentils:

<http://www.lentils.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Get-Started-with-Lentils-General-Info-Sheet-ENG.pdf>

Pulse Canada website:

<http://www.pulsecanada.com/food-industry/pulse-benefits/health-nutrition/>

Making Baby Food Class Checklist

Notes

Before

- Choose recipes & make copies for participants
- Purchase ingredients
- Review the optional nutrition lesson

During

- Introductions
- Review handwashing and food safety
- Prepare the recipes
- Complete the nutrition lesson
- Clean up and taste food

After

- Note the number of participants
- Note the cost of the recipes
- Make note of any improvements to the class or recipes