

Guidelines for Weaning Your Baby in Japan

The best time to start feeding your baby solid food to begin the weaning process is around five to six months of age. By this time your baby should be able to lift his/her head, roll over in bed and sit up for five seconds or more. Your baby should also be showing interest in food and not pushing out spoons and other items put in his/her mouth with the tongue. Be patient, and proceed according to your baby's individual development.



| | Start of weaning  | | | End of weaning |
|------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| | Initial phase Around 5 to 6 months of age | Medium phase Around 7 to 8 months of age | Latter phase Around 9 to 11 months of age | End phase Around 12 to 18 months of age |
| Guidelines for feeding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start with one spoonful once a day according to your baby's condition and mood ○ Give your baby as much breastmilk or formula as he/she wants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Get your baby accustomed to a meal rhythm by preparing two meals a day ○ Increase the types of food you provide so your baby can enjoy various tastes and textures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keep meal rhythm/timing in mind and switch to three meals a day ○ Keep meals fun through communal eating | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintain a lifestyle rhythm by keeping a meal rhythm of serving three meals a day in mind ○ Increase your baby's enjoyment of eating on his/her own by serving foods eaten by hand |
| Meal preparation | Smoothly grated | Soft enough to crush with their tongue | Soft enough to crush with gums | Soft enough to chew with gums |
| Amount per meal | | | | |
| Grains | Start with crushed congee (<i>okayu</i> in Japanese). Also try crushed vegetables. When the baby gets used to it, try out crushed tofu, white-fish and egg yolks. | 50 to 80 g of 5:1 congee (<i>okayu</i>) | 90 g of 5:1 congee (<i>okayu</i>) to 80 g of soft rice | 90 g of soft rice to 80 g of rice |
| Vegetables and fruits | | 20 to 30 g | 30 to 40 g | 40 to 50 g |
| Fish | | 10 to 15 g | 15 g | 15 to 20 g |
| Or meat | | 10 to 15 g | 15 g | 15 to 20 g |
| Or tofu | | 30 to 40 g | 45 g | 50 to 55 g |
| Or eggs | | One egg yolk to One-third of a whole egg | Half a whole egg | Half to two-thirds of a whole egg |
| Or dairy | | 50 to 70 g | 80 g | 100 g |
| Growth of teeth | Baby teeth start growing | | | Eight front teeth come out around a year of age Back teeth start growing before two years of age |
| Eating ability | Can eat and swallow while closing his/her mouth | He/she can crush food with his/her tongue and upper jaw | He/she can crush food with his/her gums | Starts to use teeth to chew |

- The information above is a rough indicator; please adjust the timing of the phases according to your baby's appetite and development.
- Never give honey to infants under one year of age, since it may cause infant botulism.
- When trying out a new food, start with one spoonful of a baby spoon.
- Seasoning is not necessary in the initial phase. As you progress through the phases above, season the food very lightly.

Size of Food

| | Five to six months of age | Seven to eight months of age | Nine to eleven months of age | One to 1.5 years of age |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Congee (<i>okayu</i>) |  10:1 congee. Crush it until your baby gets used to it. |  7:1 congee. There is no need to crush the rice if it is boiled until soft. |  5:1 congee. Switch to soft rice when your baby gets used to it. |  Soft rice. Switch to regular rice when your baby gets used to it. |
| Vegetable |  Boil until soft, and grate until smooth. |  Boil until soft and cut into pieces from 3 to 5 mm. |  Cut into 5 to 8mm pieces, then boil until soft. |  Cut into 1 cm pieces and boil until soft. |
| Fish |  Boil it, remove the skin and bones, and grate until smooth. |  Boil it, remove the skin and bones, and flake it. |  Boil it, remove the skin and bones, and cut into pieces from 5 to 8 mm. |  Boil it, remove the skin and bones, and cut into bitesize pieces. |



How to make congee (*okayu*)

- 1) Measure the rice, then wash and drain it
- 2) Put it in the pot and add the amount of water noted below
- 3) Let the rice absorb the water for 20 to 30 minutes
- 4) Cook it on high heat until it boils, lower the heat, shift the lid slightly so the rice does not boil over, and cook for 50 minutes
- 5) Turn off the heat, close the lid, and let sit for 10 minutes

Making congee (*okayu*) together with regular rice using a rice cooker

Put the uncooked rice and water for congee (*okayu*) in a deep heat-resistant container, place the container in the center of the rice cooker and cook in standard cooking mode together with regular rice.



| 10:1 congee | 7:1 congee | 5:1 congee | Soft rice |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Rice: Half a cup Water: Five cups | Rice: Half a cup Water: 3.5 cups | Rice: Half a cup Water: 2.5 cups | Rice: Half a cup Water: 1.5 cups |

○Separating baby food you prepare into single-serving portions and freezing it is a good time-saver. Always use frozen baby food within a week, and make sure to use a microwave or the like to reheat portions.