

# Q&A

## An innovative approach to inculcating good eating habits in the early years.



for parents

### Sample feeding schedule for an eight- to nine- month-old infant



Morning

**6am**  
180ml - 210ml milk (breast or age-appropriate formula)  
**9am**  
4 - 5 tbsp of infant rice cereal mixed with milk



Afternoon

**12pm**  
½ bowl porridge, with ½ tbsp finely-minced chicken, 1 tbsp finely-chopped spinach  
¼ slice roughly mashed papaya  
**3pm**  
180-210ml milk and 1 baby biscuit or teething rusk



Evening

**6pm**  
½ large potato, mashed, with 1 tbsp mashed steamed fish, 1 tbsp roughly mashed broccoli  
¼ soft pear  
**9pm**  
180 - 210ml milk  
**12am**  
180 - 210ml milk

- **Progress towards two to three meals a day for your baby.** Reduce the frequency of milk feeds to about four feeds a day. Your baby's diet should include most, if not all of the food groups. A balanced diet should include carbohydrates, protein-based foods, a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, as well as small amounts of dairy foods such as cheese and yogurt. ♥

Q **Could you share some innovative approaches to inculcate good eating habits in our children?**

**Rebecca Han:** The best time to inculcate good eating habits in children are during their early years. These habits take a while to develop, so the earlier we start, the stronger the foundation and more positive the lifelong benefits will be to the child. It is important for adults to be good role models and influence children's

eating habits so that they will make better decisions in their food choices in future.



for professionals

### Here are some tried and tested tips:

- **Introduce good eating habits through story-telling and role-play,** so that children understand the importance of the subject.
- **Share with the children the source of the food they eat daily so that they know where food comes from.** They will then be able to appreciate food better and avoid wastage.
- **Create mealtime routines in school.** For instance, encourage children to take turns to set the table or decorate it with plants. This makes mealtime an

enjoyable experience.

- **Eat together with the children during mealtimes.** This is important as pre-school teachers can then demonstrate good eating habits.
- **Be creative.** Try serving food a different way so that the children will not be bored.
- **Introduce new food** but remember to give the children time to get used to it.



Q **My child is eight months old. How do I plan for his nutritional needs?**

**Grace Quek:** At eight months old, your baby is now ready to try foods with lumpier and thicker textures, as he would have been introduced to, and sampled, solids of smooth purees from the different food groups for the past two months or so.

- **Introduce foods with textures that require some chewing.** This is an important developmental stage for Baby to improve his oral skills and mouth muscles. You could feed him lumpy porridge with finely minced meat, finely chopped vegetables, oatmeal with mashed fruit, or mashed potato with minced meat and chopped vegetables.
- **Finger foods facilitate chewing and self-feeding skills.** Slice or cut the food items into matchstick-size to facilitate self-feeding. Introduce small pieces of soft fruit like banana, teething rusks, baby biscuits, boiled vegetables or soft bread.

## Ask The Experts!



**MS REBECCA HAN** is a Senior Programme Specialist with Odyssey the Global Preschool (Busy Bees). She is involved in curriculum design and development. Rebecca works closely with curriculum mentors and teachers through coaching, mentoring and training. She was also appointed an ECDA Fellow in April 2015 to help drive quality improvements and develop the fraternity of early childhood professionals.



**MS GRACE QUEK** is a Senior Dietitian with the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKWCH). In her eight years, she has provided a wide range of nutritional advice and support for women and children. Ms Quek also conducts weaning workshops twice a year, teaching parents the principles of appropriate weaning and feeding practices.