

Complementary Feeding: Diet Diversity



Ministry of Women & Child Development
Government of India, 2018

6





Ensure that babies are eating all kinds of food items that the family eats –



Before starting the session, ask the local AWW or ASHA to arrange for 2-3 babies in the 6-8 months age group to be called to the session venue by the end of the meeting. Ask the mothers to come with their babies and with whatever has been cooked at home in small katoris. They should also bring some edible oil or ghee. Explain that we will practice feeding babies a variety of foods today.

Display the card. Ask the participants to read the questions and respond. Facilitate a discussion. Ask the same questions about a child older than one year.

Make a list of foods that are allowed and not allowed, using the table on the right.

For every 'Not Allowed' answer, ask why. Let there be a discussion.

Should the following foods be given to young babies?

Type of Food	7-8 Months	12-15 Months
Thick Dal		
Khichdi		
Green Vegetables		
Edible Oil/Ghee/Butter		
Papaya		
Protein rich food		
Cow/Buffalo Milk		
Curd		



10 Minute

M6

Complementary Feeding: Diet Diversity

F1

Ensure that babies are eating all kinds of food items that the family eats –



7-8 Month

What food items can be given to a 7 – 8 month old child?



Khichdi



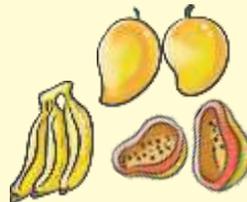
Thick Dal



Green Leafy Vegetable



Cooking Oil



Fruits



Curd



Milk/Paneer

What food items should not be given to a 7 – 8 month old child?



Biscuit



Daal water



Tea



Powdered Milk





What is the importance of different sources of food?



Display the card.

Ask the participants:

'Why do we eat different foods? Why not only one type of food?'

Let there be a discussion. Use the points on the right and the images on the card to facilitate the discussion on sources of foods from plants.

Different foods provide us different essential nutrients that we need to survive and remain healthy and fit.

Cereals, Millets	Provide a lot of carbohydrates – the energy that is required to run the body and its organs, perform all activities and to keep us warm. Tubers like potatoes also provide carbohydrates. But cereals also provide some protein in addition to carbohydrates which tubers do not.
Pulses, Legumes, Nuts	Pulses and legumes are the main source of proteins for people who do not eat non-vegetarian food items. Proteins are for the body what bricks are for a building – the bones, muscles, organs are all made of proteins. Proteins are also vital for protecting us from infections and disease. Nuts are rich sources of many vitamins and minerals, particularly of zinc.
Yellow-Orange Vegetables and Fruits	Yellow pumpkin, carrots, papaya, mango – where the whole fruit is yellow or orange – are good sources of Vitamin A for those who do not eat eggs and meats. Tomatoes are red but not a good source of Vitamin A. Vitamin A helps in keeping our eyes healthy, improves immunity and prevents infections like diarrhea, pneumonia, and measles from becoming very severe.
Green Leafy Vegetables	Different kinds of green leafy vegetables are good sources of iron, Vitamin A and Vitamin B. Iron is used to make blood in the body. There are many components of vitamin B, each essential for important body functions such as making new blood or helping burn fuel.
Edible Oils	All types of edible fats and oils are very rich sources of energy. Even small amounts of oils/fats can provide enough energy.



15 Minute

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What is the importance of different sources of food?



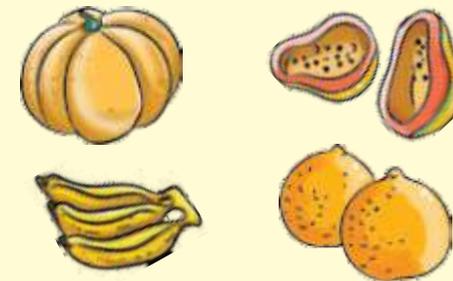
Vegetable sources such as



1. Cereals, Millets



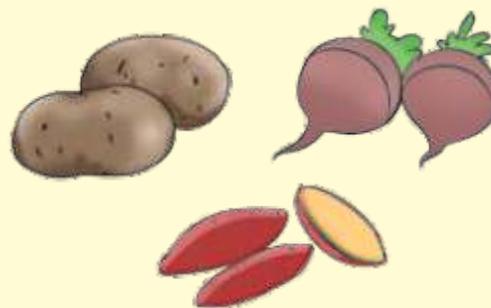
2. Pulses, Legumes



3. Yellow-Orange Vegetables/Fruits



4. Green Leafy Vegetables



5. Roots, Tubers



6. Edible oil





What is the importance of different sources of food?



Display the card.

Ask the participants:

'What is the importance of foods from animal sources?'

Let there be a discussion. Use the points on the right and the images on the card to facilitate the discussion on sources of foods from animals.

Different foods provide us different essential nutrients that we need to survive and remain healthy and fit.

Milk, Curd	For those who do not eat meat and eggs, milk and its products provide good quality proteins. These are also a good source of Vitamin A and D, and calcium. Vitamin D and calcium are necessary for healthy bones.
Other Protein Rich Foods	Households that are non-vegetarian may continue to feed food items that are good sources of high quality protein, Vitamin A and D. Also the food should be well cooked, soft and mashed.



10 Minute

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Complementary Feeding: Diet Diversity

F3

What is the importance of different sources of food?





What are the nutrient needs of young babies?



Display the card.

Ask the participants to read the points one by one.

Use the points on the right to explain each point in more detail.



Explain:

'Most of the nutrition needs are met by breast milk in the first six months, but after that, the child must be fed a variety of food items to meet these needs.'

Explain:

'It is not necessary that the child must eat all types of food every day, but it is sufficient if the child gets variety of food over many days.'

Babies need a variety of nutrients even more than adults, for a number of reasons:

1. **For Growth:** Babies grow in height and weight throughout childhood, particularly in the mother's womb and in the first two years. This means the bones grow in length, muscles develop and all organs inside the body become larger. Every type of nutrient is needed for this growth: proteins, vitamins, iron, zinc, and a lot of energy (carbohydrates and fats) to help the growth.
2. **For learning:** A child's brain grows to a size almost as large as an adult brain by 2 years of age. The child learns quickly, and her memory builds up as she sees, hears, and touches the world around her. For the development of the brain as well, every type of nutrient is needed, and any deficit leads to slow learning.
3. **For activity:** With every month, the baby becomes more active, turning over, crawling, sitting up, standing and finally walking. She reaches out to hold objects, picks them up and releases them, becomes friendly with more people and plays with them. Without adequate activity, neither growth nor learning can be adequate. Activity needs a lot of energy, and a lot of the carbohydrate and fat is used up for this.
4. **For fighting infections:** As the child grows up in the first two years, she falls ill often, with fever, diarrhea, or cold and cough. For her body to learn to fight infections, she needs a variety of different nutrients in her diet. Absence of sufficient nutrition can prolong her illnesses; she can lose weight and fall seriously ill.



15 Minute

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F4

What are the nutrient needs of young babies?



Babies need a variety of nutrients, even more than adults, for a number of purposes:

- Growth
- Learning
- Activity
- Fighting infections

Similarly, pregnant women also need enough nutrition for the growing child in the womb.





How should we help families feed babies the best available variety?



Display the card.

Ask the participants to read the questions one by one, and let there be a discussion.

Use the points on the right to facilitate the discussions.



Emphasize:

There are three simple rules for helping families feed a variety of foods:

1. Ask the family to feed the child a small amount of every item that is cooked or made at home. Do not advise families to feed what they do not have.
2. Every meal should have at least four different food items. For instance, one item from any four of the following types of food:
 - Rice or roti
 - Dal
 - Oil or ghee
 - Yellow-orange vegetables
 - Green leafy vegetables
 - Protein rich foods from animal sources
 - Milk or curds
3. As the child starts growing teeth and starts chewing food, you can offer food that is less soft. However, do not give hard foods that can be swallowed such as peanuts or gram – they may get stuck in the throat and the child may choke.

At what age can a child be given different foods?

- By the time the child is 6 months old, she can digest almost any food that she eats, as long as the food is soft and not spicy
- The earlier the child is offered different foods, the earlier she will learn to appreciate different tastes and types of food.
- By the age of 1 year, the child can chew and eat most foods that are cooked at home

How to start giving more variety of food to a child?

1. Increase the number of food items added to a meal:
 - Most families will be willing to start feeding dal-rice or khichdi or roti soaked in dal to the child at the age of six months. As long as this meal is very soft and not spicy, babies will learn to eat small amounts in a few days. Such a meal should be offered 2-3 times a day.
 - Once the child has become used to eating small amounts of such simple food, the family can start adding other food items one by one.
 - Any food cooked at home can be fed to the child. Vegetables can be mashed and added to the rice or dal.
 - Oil or ghee can be added to the meal.
 - Milk or curd can be added to the meal, taking care that the meal does not become too watery.
 - The protein rich foods from animal sources can be added to the meal.
2. Offer a snack between meals
 - Fruits like papaya, mango, banana can be offered as snacks, after mashing the fruit to make it soft like pulp

As the mother feeds different types and tastes of food, she will slowly learn what the child likes and dislikes, and can accordingly decide to include it in the child's meals henceforth.



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How should we help families feed babies the best available variety?



1. What foods do families generally feed their babies after six months, besides breast milk?
2. How do we help families feed more variety to their babies?
3. What is a good age to introduce more variety in the child's diet?





What opportunities do we have to ensure that babies are being fed enough variety of food?



Display the card,

Ask any two participants to read the questions one by one and respond.

Let there be a discussion.

Use the points on the right to facilitate the discussion.

Create opportunities to talk about variety of foods:

- Sixth month: We make home visits in the sixth month to prepare the family to start complementary feeding in the next month.
- Immediately after six months: We make home visits immediately after the child completes six months to make sure that the family has started giving the child complementary foods, usually starting with rice and dal or rice and milk or curd.
- Seventh and eighth months: We make home visits again in the seventh and eight months to see how well the child and mother has got used to complementary feeding. This is the right time to to counsel the family to start feeding other foods cooked at home.



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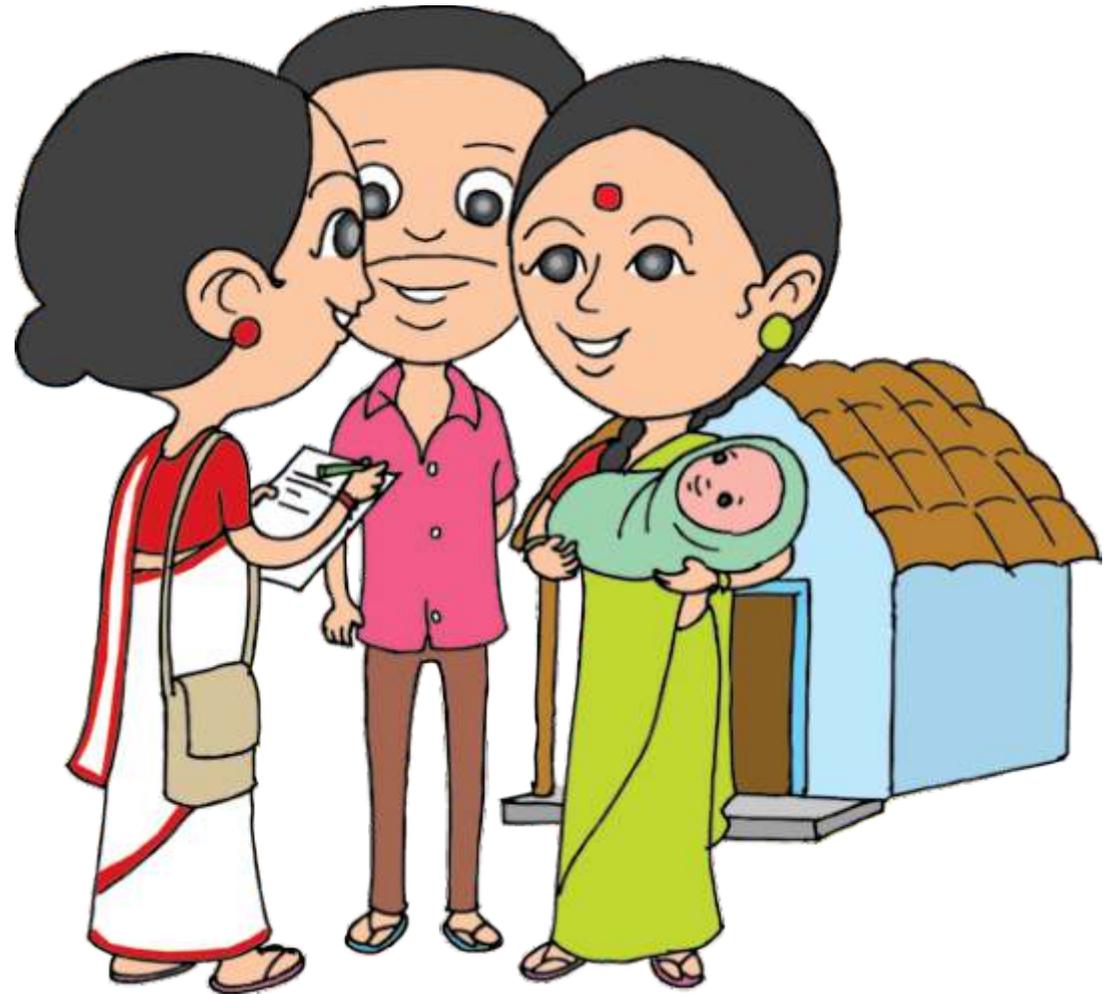
F6

What opportunities do we have to ensure that babies are being fed enough variety of food?



When should we start insisting that the family should feed a variety of foods?

What can we do if the family does not agree to give different foods?





Feeding Demonstration



Make sure that at least 2-3 mothers have arrived at the session venue with their babies aged 6-8 months, and have brought a variety of foods cooked at home that day, along with clean katori and spoon for feeding the child.

Explain that we will now try and feed the babies a variety of foods.

Follow the steps on the right to conduct the demonstration.

Steps for conducting the feeding demonstration:

1. Explain to the mother that they should join you in trying to feed their babies the food that they have brought from home.
2. Wash your own hands thoroughly with soap, and make the mothers also wash their own hands as well as those of babies.
3. Sit on the floor along with all the mothers and their babies.
4. Help each mother prepare a simple meal with rice and dal, or rice and curd, or roti and dal. Add a few drops of oil or ghee.
5. Ask the mothers to start feeding the meal to their babies.
6. After the babies have started eating, add one item from whatever other food they have brought, to the same meal – it could be a vegetable or milk or curd or any other food that family eats. Mix a small amount, after properly mashing it up, and ask the mother to try and feed this mix. Observe how the child accepts this as the mother tries to feed her.
7. Try adding another item in a similar manner to another part of the meal and offer that to the child a few times.
8. Keep interacting with the mothers in between, explaining why it is important to add the new item and how to make it soft enough to be suitable for the child.
9. Let the babies eat as much as they desire, just keep a mental note of what variety and amount the child has eaten by the end of the meal.
10. At the end, ask the mothers to describe what their babies have eaten. Thank the mothers and tell them they may now take their babies home.



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Feeding Demonstration





Action Points



Display the card.

Explain to the participants that we will now summarize what we have learnt today and decide what they will do when they go back to their respective villages.

Ask the participants to read the points one by one. For each point, ask the participants if they are in agreement. If there is any other viewpoint, discuss and resolve.

Ask the participants to open their home visit planners and find babies who are currently between 6-8 months old. Point out that these are the babies they must visit starting the next day.

Explain that their supervisor (you) will visit them at their AWCs during the next month and help them make these visits and feeding demonstrations together.



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Action Points



1. We will visit babies between 6-8 months several times at home.
2. We will first assess what the child has been fed in the past 24 hours:
 - We will ask the family what has been cooked at home that day.
 - We will ask the family whether the child has been fed each of the items, and if not, then why so?
3. If the child is hungry, we will conduct a feeding demonstration, where we will try and add different available foods to the meal.
4. We will make a record of the visit in the home visit planner, and also note down anything that will require follow up.



- 1 *Why this Monthly Meeting ?*
- 2 *Making or updating Home Visit Planner & Initiating Home Visits*
- 3 *Planning and Organizing Community Based Events at AWC*
- 4 *Observing Breastfeeding in Newborn Babies - Why and How*
- 5 *Identification and Care of a Weak Newborn baby*
- 6 **Complementary Feeding: Diet Diversity**
- 7 *Preventing Anemia in Women*
- 8 *Assessment of Growth in Children*
- 9 *Ensuring that Complementary Feeding improves over time*
- 10 *Ensuring Exclusive Breastfeeding*
- 11 *Care of the Weak Newborn Baby - How many weak babies are we missing?*
- 12 *How to ensure timely initiation of Complementary Feeding*
- 13 *Identifying and preventing Severe Acute Malnutrition*
- 14 *Feeding During Illness*
- 15 *Supporting mothers with issues in Breastfeeding*
- 16 *How to take care of weak newborn with the help of Kangaroo Mother Care*
- 17 *Identification & Referral of Sick Newborn*
- 18 *Preventing illnesses to avert Malnutrition and Death*
- 19 *Prevention of Anemia in girls and adolescents*
- 20 *Birth Preparedness- For Institutional and Home Delivery*
- 21 *Preparation During Pregnancy: For NewBorn Care & Family Planning*

