



SHERFIELD SCHOOL

Nursery • Pre-prep • Prep • Senior • Sixth Form

Early Years Foundation Stage

Food and Nutrition Policy

Introduction – all settings

Food and nutrition is an integral part of the ethos of all GEMS settings. We believe that it is important for children to have balanced, healthy meals and snacks as this will impact upon their learning and behaviour. Staff and children are expected to dine together as meal times provide a daily focal point and an opportunity to develop and build personal relationships. We must always remember that the eating habits of parents and carers are the ones that will be imitated by the children.

Please see school website for Menus. All food is cooked on site for the Nursery, Pre-Reception and Reception classes as well as for the rest of the school.

Hospitality is a very important part of the GEMS settings ethos. All visitors must receive a warm welcome and access to refreshments in the Orangery/Parents Café at Sherfield School.

Aims

- To provide balanced and healthy meals suitable for babies and young children.
- To provide varied and interesting menus.
- To encourage all pupils including those with a constrained palate to taste and try the food on offer
- To accommodate children with special dietary requirements e.g. allergy (peanut), intolerance (lactose), medical (diabetic) or cultural or religious reasons.
- To ensure that all Health and Food Safety requirements (statutory and other) are met.
- To ensure that resources (financial, personnel, equipment, ingredients) are managed to ensure best quality and value.

Child Nutrition

The first year of life is a period of very rapid growth and brain development. An infant's birth weight doubles after about five months and triples by the first birthday, by which time the infant's length increases by half. Adequate and appropriate nutrition is essential during this period. Infants who do not receive sufficient calories, vitamins and minerals will not reach their expected growth and their cognitive development may be impaired.

Nutrient Requirements

An infant's requirement for calories is determined by size, rate of growth, activity and energy needed for metabolic activities. Calorie needs per pound of body weight are higher during the first year of life than at any other time. Since there is variation among infants, a range of recommended calorie intakes have been developed. For the first four to six months of life, breast or formula feeding can provide sufficient calories. Measuring weight and length and plotting it on a standardized growth grid can help to determine the adequacy of an infant's calorie intake.

The calories in an infant's diet are provided by:

Carbohydrates: required for energy and also as a 'protein sparer'. Wholegrain carbohydrates should be avoided as they are harder to digest and this can stop the absorption of essential minerals and vitamins.

Protein: required for growth and repair and as a secondary source of energy if carbohydrate is in short supply. A wide variety of protein rich vegetarian foods should be consumed to ensure balance of essential amino acids is consumed. Foods such as; beans, lentils, cereals, dairy products, quorn, nuts.

Iron: required to prevent anaemia. Non- haem iron i.e. that found in non animal (vegetable) sources is much harder for the body to use. Eating vitamin C rich foods with iron rich foods helps the body to use the available iron more effectively. Iron rich foods are pureed dried apricots, lentils, cereals, green vegetables.

Calcium: important for growing bones and teeth, vitamin D helps the body metabolise calcium. Calcium rich foods are milk and milk products, green vegetables, sesame pasta, tofu, white bread.

Vitamin B12: important for brain and nerve cell development and function. It is the only naturally found food of animal only origin. It can be found in dairy products and eggs, some fortified soya products or supplements

Composition of the Diet (Guidance)

1. 40-50% fat
2. 40% carbohydrates
3. 10% protein

General Diet (Guidance)

1. 0 - 12 months- breast milk or cow protein based formula
2. Around 6 months- introduction of semi- solid foods
3. Breast milk supplies adequate nutrition for the first 6 months of life except for Vitamin D which should be supplemented. From 6 months to 5 years children should be given vitamin A,C and D supplements.
4. Diets should continue to have a high fat content throughout the first 2 years to ensure adequate central nervous system (CNS) growth and development. This may be accomplished with whole milk from 12-24 months.

Stomach Capacity of Small Children

The stomach capacity of babies and children is very small in comparison to their need for energy and nutrients for example

| Age | Stomach Capacity | Dietary Reference Values for daily energy intake (KCals) |
|--------------------|------------------|--|
| Infant 0 to 6 mths | 30 to 90ml | 500 to 600 |
| Infant 1 yr | 210 to 360ml | 1200 |
| Toddler | 500ml | 1200 to 1600 |
| Child aged 6 to 12 | 750 to 900ml | 1600 to 1800 |
| Adolescent | 1000 to 1500ml | 2100 to 2700 |
| Adult | 1000ml | 2000 to 2200 |

Source: Paediatric Nursing and British Nutrition Foundation, DRV from Dept of Health.

Milk

Breast milk is recognised as best for all babies where possible. Where this is not possible formula milk should be used. Although formula milk does not contain the antibodies and growth hormones of breast milk some formulas contain other

components such as long chain fatty acids that are thought to be good for brain development – so it is a good idea to check the ingredients.

Soya milk should only be used following medical advice. Soya baby formula contains higher levels of phytoestrogens than breast milk and it is not sure what effect this may have on the growing baby.

Cow's milk should not be introduced as the main drinking milk before the age of 1 as it is a poor source of iron. However it can be used as a weaning food. Full fat milk should always be used for vegetarian children as it is more energy and nutrient dense than semi skimmed milk.

Weaning

There is lots of debate about when is the right time to wean babies.

There should be no need to wean babies before 4 months old. The Department of Health (UK) recommends waiting until 6 months old.

A baby's stomach is immature and is not capable of peristalsis until 8 months old. However, waiting after this time can affect speech as chewing on food is important for language development.

Diet Supplements

Infants receiving breast milk as their main drink after the age of 6 months should receive supplements of vitamins A, C and D (in the form of liquid drops). Infants receiving at least 500ml of infant formula daily do not require these vitamin drops since the vitamins are already added to the formula. If babies are consuming infant formula or follow-on milk in smaller amounts, or they are being given cows' milk, supplements of vitamins A and D should be given.

It is also recommended that between the ages of one to five years, vitamin A, C and D supplements should be given unless adequate intake and exposure to sunlight can be assured"

Fluoride

Currently the AAP does not recommend supplementation with fluoride until the infant is 6 months old and lives in an area with <0.3ppm of fluoride supplementation in the water supply.

Many available commercial infant waters are supplemented with fluoride.

Hazards

Honey should not be used for young children as it may contain botulism, this can cause severe food poisoning.

Whole nuts should not be eaten by young children as their teeth are not formed sufficiently well or are strong enough to chew them and they present a choking hazard. **As many children have nut allergies, products containing nuts or have derivatives of nuts should not be served.**

Healthy Diets for Vegetarian Babies and Young Children

There are many different types of Vegetarians the two most commonly known are:

- vegans who consume no foods and use no household or clothing products from animal sources;
- lacto-vegetarians eat dairy products and eggs and will be the main focus of the information given in this guide.

A vegetarian diet can provide a child with good nutrition provided there is plenty of variety to ensure adequate nutrition.

- Humans are the only mammals that cannot synthesise vitamin C in the gut.
- Eggs contain all nutrients except vitamin C.
- Iron needs vitamin C to work well in the body.
- Calcium needs vitamin D to work well in the body.
- If the body doesn't have enough energy rich foods it will use protein rich foods for energy rather than for growth.

Young children have little stomachs and can't eat much more than 3 tablespoons of food and a small drink at one sitting yet they have a high nutrient and energy requirement relative to their size. This can present a problem for vegetarians as often the food is more bulky and filling. Frequent high energy snacks are required.

It will most likely be necessary to supplement a vegetarian diet with vitamin drops (Vitamin C, D,A, B12) particularly with under 5's.

1. Caution with soya products particularly Soya formula milk due to plant oestrogens that soya naturally contains.
2. No low fat – must be full fat energy dense for pre- school vegetarian children
3. Hazards – honey and nuts

References: "Vegetarian Pregnancy, Vegetarian Baby" by the Vegetarian Society found at www.vegsoc.org/document.doc?id=9

get off to a flying start!



- Sugar swaps**
Swap food and drink that is high in added sugar to no added or sugar free versions
- Meal time**
Try and make time for 3 regular meals a day
- Me size meals**
Remember kids tummies are smaller than grown-ups so they don't need the same amount of food
- 5 A DAY**
Make sure they get a variety of at least 5 portions of fruit and veg every day
- Snack check**
Regular, healthy snacks really help kids grow and develop well
- Up and about**
Help your kids to have lots and lots of time to play and run about

For more early years information ask a member of staff or search Change4Life

