

# Feeding your vegan baby



**PLANT-BASED**  
Health Professionals UK

Promoting Sustainable Health and Nutrition

## The first year

Dr Miriam Martinez-Biarge,  
Paediatrician

### 0-6 months

#### Breastmilk is the ideal food for babies.

It provides all nutrients babies need except for vitamin D, and promotes healthy growth and development. It contains antibodies that help to protect babies against infections; as well as prebiotics and probiotics that contribute to developing a healthy gut microbiome.

*Try to breastfeed your baby as long as you can. Even if you cannot breastfeed exclusively, providing some breastmilk feeds will still be very beneficial for you and your baby.*

### Dietary recommendations for breastfeeding mothers



Remember to include in your diet:

#### CAROTENOID-RICH

sweet potato  
carrot  
pumpkin  
spinach  
peppers

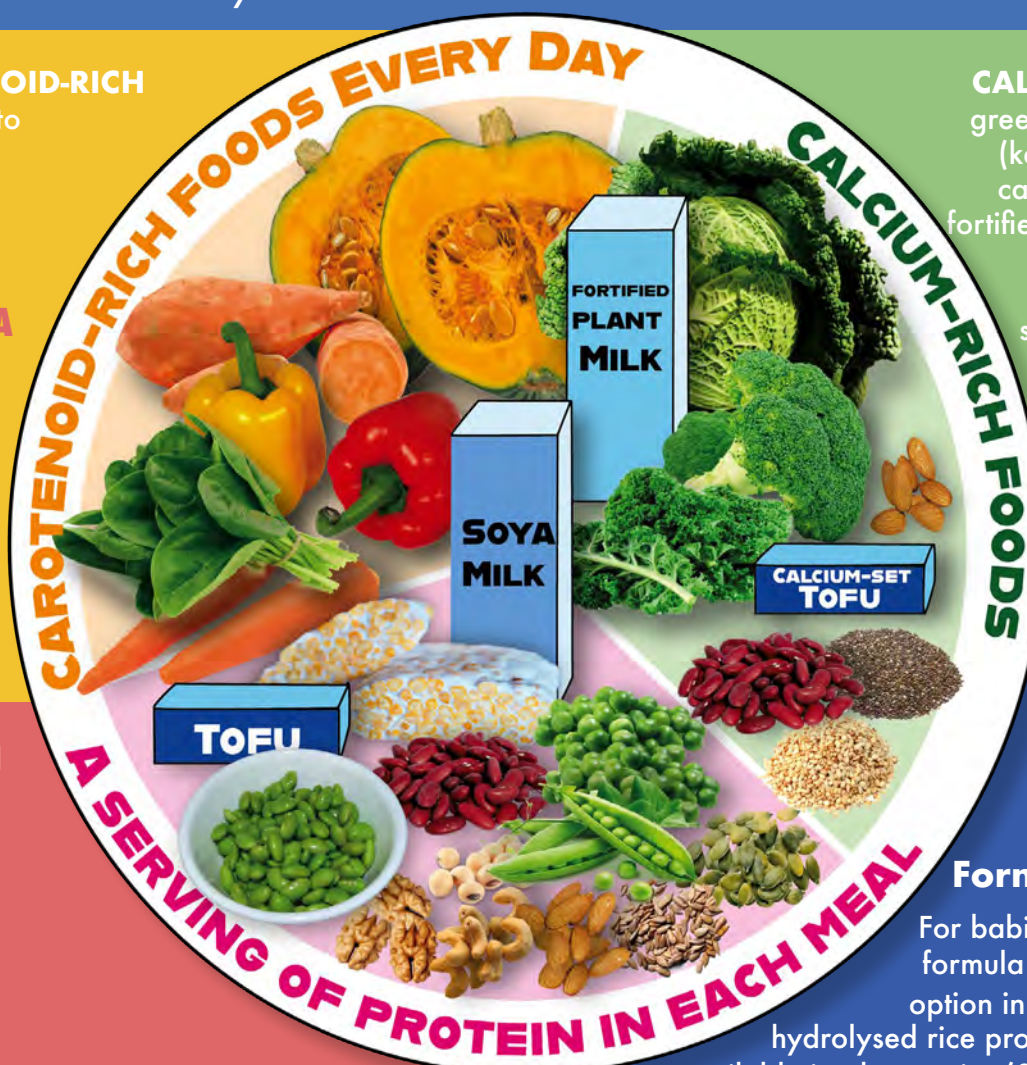
**Vitamin A**  
requirements  
double during  
breastfeeding

#### PROTEIN

beans  
legumes  
soya milk  
tofu  
tempeh  
nuts  
seeds

#### CALCIUM-RICH

green vegetables  
(kale, broccoli)  
calcium-set tofu  
fortified plant milks  
legumes  
chia seeds  
sesame seeds  
almonds



#### Formula Milk

For babies who need formula milk the only option in the UK for a hydrolysed rice protein formula, available in pharmacies (Similac Arize, manufactured by Abbott\*). This formula can be used safely from the day of birth.

#### Supplements for breastfeeding women

**B12** **Vitamin B12** (cyanocobalamin):  
10-25mcg a day or 1,000 mcg 2 times per week

**D3** **Vitamin D3** (plant-based): 600 IU a day

**IODINE** **Iodine**: 150-200 mcg a day

**OMEGA 3** **Long chain omega-3 fatty acid** (plant-based):  
400-500 mg a day (at least 250 mg of DHA)

#### Supplements for breastfeeding babies

**D3** 400 IU a day of plant-based vitamin D3



\*This formula is not 100% vegan since it contains, in very low quantities, a biosynthesised ingredient which is derived from lactose. The vitamin D and DHA are plant-based. Read [here](#) for further information.

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### 6-12 months

#### Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months:

The WHO and most health and paediatric organizations, including the NHS and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. Some babies show interest for other foods earlier and can be introduced to solid foods between 5-6 months, but only if they are ready.

*No other foods apart from human milk or formula should be offered to a baby before 4 months.*

#### Signs a baby is ready to try new foods:

- Baby sits up with no support (or only very slight support at the level of the hips)
- Baby shows interest in others foods (looks at them, tries to grab them)
- Baby makes chewing movements (usually in imitation)
- Baby has lost the tongue-thrust reflex – they don't automatically push solids out of their mouth with their tongue anymore
- Baby can grasp objects and bring them to their mouth



#### How to start

See page 3 for foods to feed your baby

Continue on-demand breastfeeding for as long as you can. Breastmilk is the main source of calories and most nutrients until the end of the first year



**6 months + :**  
Start with a small amount of solid food, once a day. A few days later if your baby is enjoying this meal start offering a second meal. By 9 months they should be eating three meals of solids a day

Food can be blended and mashed and offered by spoon, can be offered in the form of soft cooked sticks (baby-led-weaning) or a combination of both methods, according to family's preferences. There is no evidence that one method is better than other

#### Foods to avoid during the first year:

- Greens high in nitrates: spinach, beets, Swiss chard
- Plant milks. Only breastmilk and formula milk are appropriate at this age
- Any amount of added salt or sugar, including syrups
- Fruit juices
- **Foods that can cause choking:**  
*Whole nuts (always offer them finely milled or as a thin layer of butter), whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, popcorn, whole olives, raw whole carrots or celery*

Whatever method you choose, always stop offering food to your baby when they show signs that they are full (shakes head, pulls away...)

#### Use very small amounts of oils

(olive, rapeseed) for cooking. *Instead of oils, use whenever possible avocados, olive paste, and nuts and seeds.* These foods are rich in healthy fats, but they also provide protein, minerals, vitamins, fibre and antioxidants.



#### Supplements 6 -12 months

- D3** Vitamin D3 (plant-based): continue 400 IU a day
- B12** Start supplementing vitamin B12 when baby is eating 3 meals of complementary foods a day. Options: 2.5 - 5mcg a day or 250 - 300 mcg once a week
- IODINE** If baby breastfeeds on demand and mother is taking iodine and omega-3 supplements, there is no need to supplement baby with these
- OMEGA 3**



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Offer foods from these four food groups every day:



### RIPE FRUIT:

Apple, pear, banana, all types of berries, peach, plums, orange, clementine, kiwi, avocado, mango, pineapple, melon

### PROTEIN-RICH FOODS:

Tofu, tempeh, hummus and other legume spreads, cooked chickpeas and other pulses, peanut butter and nut butters (thin layers)

### WHOLE GRAINS:

Sourdough bread, cooked pasta, cooked rice and millet, oat crackers, couscous, quinoa, chapatti and pita bread

### COOKED VEGETABLES:

Carrots, potatoes and sweet potatoes, cooked pumpkin, steamed broccoli, cauliflower, peas, courgette, asparagus, cabbage, kale



Continue on-demand  
breastfeeding



### BABY LED WEANING PLATE



All foods should squish easily between thumb and forefinger

Offer iron-rich foods early,  
combined with vitamin C-rich  
foods in the same meal

### VITAMIN C - RICH FOODS:

Orange, grapefruit, pineapple, mango, kiwi, strawberries, broccoli, tomatoes

### IRON - RICH FOODS:

Lentils, hummus, tofu, wholemeal bread, ground seeds