

# Allergies

Babies are more likely to develop allergies if there is a family history of eczema, asthma or hayfever. For these families, exclusive breastfeeding is particularly recommended for the first six months. Introduce the foods that commonly cause allergies (milk, eggs, wheat, peanuts, nuts, seeds, fish and shellfish) one at a time so that you can spot any reaction, but don't introduce any of these foods before six months.

Soya-based infant formulas should only be used on the advice of your GP or health visitor. Some babies who are allergic to cow's milk may also be allergic to soya. Infant formulas based on goat's milk protein have not been approved for use in Europe.



## CHOKING

Babies can choke on foods so be careful with hard foods such as raw carrot sticks or large apple pieces or small round foods like grapes. Also be careful with foods with skin (like sausages) or fish with bones. Cut food into small pieces and remove all skin and bones or lightly cook vegetables like carrots before feeding to your baby.

## Foods to avoid

### **SALT**

From 7-12 months babies should not have more than one gram of salt per day. Breastmilk and infant formula milk both contain salt. Do not add any salt to foods for babies. When you are cooking for the family, do not add salt, so your baby can share the family foods.

### **SUGAR**

Sugar can encourage a sweet tooth and lead to tooth decay when first teeth start to come through. Try mashed banana, breast or formula milk to sweeten food if necessary.

### **HONEY**

Don't give honey until your baby is one year old. Very occasionally, it can contain a type of bacteria, which can produce toxins in the baby's intestines and can cause a very serious illness (infant botulism).

Remember that honey is also a sugar and can lead to tooth decay.

### **NUTS**

Whole nuts, including peanuts, should not be given to children under five years in case of choking.

### **LOW-FAT FOODS**

Low-fat foods, whether yoghurt, fromage frais, cheese or fat spreads are not suitable for babies or children under two. Fat is an important source of calories and some vitamins which they need.

**Remember to check the food label**