

Your calm first-foods plan

First Bites

Your baby's first 14 days of food, mapped out for you: safe shapes, choking readiness, allergens, and family meals.

For babies around 6 months and developmentally ready

14-day plan | safe-cut cards | 100 foods

A note before you begin

For the parent who's excited and nervous at the same time.

Handing your baby a strip of avocado and watching them work it out for themselves is one of the most delightful things in early parenthood. It can also be one of the most nerve-wracking.

If you're excited about baby-led weaning but quietly terrified of choking, this guide is for you. We'll start with what the research actually says, then teach you the difference between gagging and choking, infant first aid, and exactly how to prepare dozens of foods safely for your baby's age.

You don't have to choose between baby-led weaning and purées. Many families combine both. What matters is that your baby is safe, well nourished, and learning to enjoy food at the family table.

Take a breath. You can do this, and your baby can too.

You do not need a perfect meal. You need an upright baby, a safe texture, close supervision, and permission to start small.



What the research says

The most rigorous research on baby-led weaning comes from a randomized trial in New Zealand called BLISS. Here's what it and other studies found.

What the research says

No higher choking rate

In a randomized trial of 206 infants, a modified baby-led approach with safety education did not have a higher choking rate than spoon-feeding.

Fangupo and colleagues, Pediatrics, 2016

What the research says

35% of families

reported at least one choking episode between 6 and 8 months, across feeding methods. First-aid readiness matters whichever approach you use.

Fangupo and colleagues, Pediatrics, 2016

What the research says

Less fussy eating

Babies following the baby-led approach showed less food fussiness and more enjoyment of food at 12 months.

Taylor and colleagues, JAMA Pediatrics, 2017

What the research says

81% fewer allergies

In high-risk infants, eating peanut early and regularly led to an 81% reduction in peanut allergy by age 5, compared with avoiding it.

LEAP study, New England Journal of Medicine, 2015

What this means for you

In the BLISS trial, a modified baby-led approach paired with safety education was not riskier than spoon-feeding. That finding is not a guarantee: safe textures, close supervision, and current infant first-aid training matter for every feeding method.

What's inside

1 **Getting ready** 6
Readiness, gear, the research, and iron.

2 **Safety first** 12
Gagging versus choking, first aid, and hazards.

3 **Safe cuts by age** 18
Visual preparation cards for over 20 foods.

4 **Allergens** 29
Early introduction and signs of a reaction.

5 **First foods and family meals** 34
Starter plan, family meals, and recipes.

6 **Common worries** 41
Refusal, mess, and when to get help.

\+ **Printables** 46
Quick reference, first 100 foods, and food log.

Read these first

13 Gagging versus choking

14 Infant choking first aid

19 How your baby's grasp changes

30 Why early introduction matters



Part 2 | 5-min read

Gagging versus choking

The most important page in this book. Learning the difference lets you stay calm when it's normal, and act fast when it isn't.

Gagging

Noisy. Normal. Protective.

- Coughing, sputtering
- Red face, watery eyes
- Tongue pushes forward
- May spit food out

Choking

Silent. Emergency.

- Can't cry, cough, or breathe
- Weak or no sound
- Lips or face turn blue or pale
- Panicked expression

If your baby gags

- Stay calm and close, and keep your face relaxed
- Let them work it out. Don't put your fingers in their mouth
- Gagging is a normal, protective reflex that pushes food forward
- It usually becomes less frequent with practice

If your baby is choking

- Act immediately. Choking is often silent
- Start infant choking first aid on the next page
- Have someone call 911 or your local emergency number

What the research says

Gagging fades

Baby-led babies gagged more often than spoon-fed babies at 6 months, but less often at 8 months.

Fangupo and colleagues, Pediatrics, 2016

Part 4 5-min read

How to introduce allergens

1. **Start once your baby is eating a few other foods well.**

2. **Introduce one new allergen at a time,**
in a small amount, earlier in the day, so you can watch for a reaction.

3. There is no need for a long delay between allergens. Offering only one new allergen on a given day, and waiting a day or two if that helps you identify a reaction, is a practical approach.

4. **Keep it in the diet.**
Once tolerated, offer it regularly, a few times a week.

Allergen	Safe ways to offer
Peanut	Smooth peanut butter thinned with water or breast milk, stirred into oatmeal or spread very thinly on toast
Egg	Well-cooked omelet strips or scrambled egg
Dairy	Plain full-fat yogurt, or shredded cheese
Wheat	Toast strips, or soft pasta
Sesame	Tahini thinned and swirled into yogurt or spread thinly
Fish	Flaked, boneless salmon or cod

Morning is best

Choose a time when your baby is well and you can watch them closely for about two hours. Reactions often begin within minutes but can occur later.