

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Department Transitional Food Textures – Learning to Chew

Children need practice to bite and chew well. They need to practise:

- Moving their tongue from side to side and round and round
- Moving their jaw from side to side, up, down and round and round

Usually children start practising chewing with very soft foods at 6-9 months. Some children are able to manage lumpy food well. Others find this harder and may gag.

Transitional foods are good to help children practise chewing. These are foods that can melt in your mouth. They start as one texture but change into another when moisture like water or saliva is added. They are a good next step for children who do not cope with lumps in pureed food. They can be safer for finger feeding. You must always supervise children when they are trying these foods. Some examples of transitional foods are:

- Baby crisps and crisps that melt in the mouth e.g. Organix or Goodies brand or Wotsits
- Pink wafer biscuits
- Sponge bars



These are practice foods and should be given in small amounts.

When your child can manage these foods well, offer them soft and bite sized foods.

Examples of these are:

- Well cooked vegetables e.g. carrot, sweet potato
- Soft fruit e.g. mashed banana, strawberries



Check the ingredients are safe if your child has an allergy.

Tips to help with transitional foods

- Help your child put food to the side of their mouth. They will chew better and enjoy the different textures more. You can help by showing them how to do this when you eat.
- Some foods take longer to dissolve in saliva than others. Start with transitional foods that dissolve most quickly. Try the foods yourself to judge whether they dissolve quickly.
- Try to eat when your child is eating. If they can see you eating and enjoying food they will be happier to try.
- It can take children 15 tastes to decide if they like a new texture or taste. If they refuse, stop for now and try again at another time.

Loughborough University has a useful website www.childfeedingguide.co.uk

Telephone: 01226 644331 (answer machine available)

Email: barnsley.speechtherapy@swyt.nhs.uk

Website: www.barnsleyspeechtherapy.co.uk

Facebook: @Barnsley Specialist Children's health

Twitter: @BarnsleySCH

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/Barnsleyspeechandlanguagetherapy>