All parents want their children to grow up to be fit and healthy adults. In the first two years of a child’s life their brains and bodies grow and develop more than at any other time.

So it’s important what you feed your child because it could affect them for the rest of their lives.

My wife feeds my son very well. She gives him lots of different foods.

“Yum, yum, yum.”

My baby loves porridge. She can't get enough of it.

Giving my baby good food makes him happy and that makes me happy too.

My wife feeds the family very good food. I can see that my baby girl is growing well because of what she feeds her.

Breast milk is all your baby needs for the first six months of life. After this it is vital to introduce other foods alongside breast milk. This is called complimentary feeding. Let’s find out more about it.

This is Thelma. She is mother to twins Leonard and Reginald who are eight months old. She breast-feeds her
boys but recently began feeding them solids as well.

I am buying potatoes. I want to crush them with some meat or maybe sardine or if I can find some fish and blend it with some vegetables as well. That will be their lunch.

Some tomatoes

You like orange?

I am looking for something green like broccoli. If you practise healthy food with kids they continue to follow it. Start well and you get it right at the end.

It can be confusing though when to start feeding your baby and what to feed them. Let's find out what to do.

My name is Comfort. I am a nurse midwife and I've been working with mothers and children for over thirty years. Six months is the age that you need to start introducing other foods into your baby's diet because breast milk by itself isn't enough. However, just because you start other food don't stop breast-feeding. Ideally continue breast-feeding until your baby is two years old. Breast milk is an important source of food and water. It also contains substances to help stop your child getting sick and help them recover if they get sick.

As well as breast milk it's still important where possible to
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feed your child a wide variety of food.

0:03:09.8 It’s likely that you and your family eat one main food such as cereals and grains. This main food will give your child a lot of the energy they need. But this main food is not enough to keep your child healthy. You also need go, grow and glow foods.

0:03:37.3 Let’s start with go. Foods that give your child energy.

Go foods are cooking oils like coconut oil, sunflower oil or lard. nuts, seeds like pumpkins or sesame, honey, molasses or sugar. If you can, add one of these fats to your main food. But take care not to rely on too much sugar. Too much sugar can cause problems such as rotting teeth and try not to chew on cane.

0:04:10.6 Now let’s look at the foods that help your child’s body to grow. They’re called grow foods.

Grow foods can be found in milk, cheese, yoghurt, beans, peas, lentils, insects, chicken, fish, eggs and in meat. These can be hard to get but are very important. Nuts and all seeds are good as they are grow foods as well as go foods.

0:04:43.7 If your child misses out on eating grow foods in the first two years of life they may not grow to be healthy and strong. It is important to eat animal products such as meat, chicken because it helps you to prevent anaemia, which is also
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known as weak blood.

0:05:07.2 And finally glow foods. These are foods that need the glow of the sun to make them grow.

0:05:15.5 So all fruits and vegetables like tomatoes, oranges, carrots, pumpkin and green leafy vegetables. These foods make the body strong and healthy. They help to prevent infection as well as fight off illnesses if it does occur.

0:05:38.9 Every day I make sure my boy eats well: rice, beans, meat and if possible vegetables.

It’s not always easy giving my son a variety of food but I always try to because I know it’s giving him the best start in life.

0:05:58.8 Solid food is a big change for your baby so take things slowly.

Remember it might take a little while for your baby getting used to eating food.

Begin by offering your baby just a few spoons of soft food. Never force-feed or try too much too soon because they can choke. Some babies develop more quickly some more slowly. It’s all normal. Try soft foods or semi soft liquids such as thick porridge or paps and to this add sugar and oil mix with either milk or pounded groundnuts.
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0:06:42.3 You should also feed them mixtures of mashed fruit made out of either matooke, potatoes, cassava, or rice. Again mix this up with other foods such as mashed up fish, meat, beans or pounded ground nuts and add green vegetables too if you can.

0:07:09.8 I really try to feed my kids different varieties of food. And some of the varieties I choose are potatoes, vegetables and also some fish or meat to go with it. What I'm doing here now I've added vegetables with the sardine. I'm going to add the boiled potatoes next to it and then use my fork to crush it down. Mashing up the food is very good.

0:07:45.6 Between meals your child will need snacks. Try mashed ripe banana, paw-paw, mango, avocado or other fruits. Yoghurt or pudding made with milk. Bread or chapati with butter, margarine, ground nut paste, biscuit, crackers, bean cakes or cooked potatoes.

0:08:14.3 My wife makes sure my daughter has plenty of snacks throughout the day. It's great.

Yum, yum, yum.

I'm giving them afternoon snack which is sliced apples that’s what they're having for the afternoon snack.

You’re having good fun, yes, yes.
Now let's look at how often your child should be eating to make sure that brain and body develop properly.

From six months to two years continue to breast feed your baby as often as they want. Once they've got used to eating food gradually increase the amount of food they eat as well as frequency.

So from six months they need to be eating three times a day. By the time they reach twelve months they need to be eating at least three meals and two snacks a day. Once they are two years old and over they need to continue to eat three meals a day and two snacks and they'll still need breast milk.

Do remember snacks because like chickens children need to be pecking at food. It sounds funny but it's important for your child to eat often if you want them to grow up strong and healthy.

If your child gets sick they may not want to eat but you should still breast-feed them and probably a little more than normal. Afterwards encourage them to eat little and often.

Back at Thelma's, Leonard and Reginald are tucking in to their dinner. Thelma is giving them a good variety of food.

As well as feeding them solid foods I also breast-feed them. Oh he's loving it. Look at him. Can't even have enough of
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0:10:16.0 Some mothers feed their babies plenty of porridge but they still don’t put on weight. That can be worrying. Let’s find out why that happens.

0:10:24.9 It’s common that children eat a lot of porridge or pap and still do not put on weight. This is because large amount of water are added to make it easier for baby to eat. However watery thin porridge has less goodness in it so they’d have to eat lots to get all the energy they need to grow. Adding a little oil or fat to your porridge will not only make it softer but also give your baby more energy.

0:11:02.1 When introducing new food and drink to your baby you need to be careful and take precautions so your baby doesn’t get sick.

Complimentary feeding can be dangerous as it is the first time your baby comes in to contact with water and other foods that might be contaminated and could cause your baby illness such as diarrhoea. But a few simple things can make all the difference.

0:11:32.4 Wash your hands and your child’s hands before eating. Also wash your hands before preparing food. Clean your children’s plates. Boil water to drink. Cook porridge very well to ensure any germ is killed. Prepare food fresh for your child and don’t leave food over night, especially if you
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0:12:02.1 I try to store food whenever possible in a cool place and not for too long.

If I give my baby water I always boil it so that it doesn’t get sick.

0:12:17.6 I like giving my babies good food because it helps them grow very strong. I give them the right nutrition for life.

0:12:31.1 I know that getting my child’s food right in the first two years can affect their whole life.

0:12:43.4 It makes me happy to think that he is eating the best food we can give him. It’s great. He’s always full of energy.

Watching my baby eat good food – always makes me smile because I know I’m helping her to be a healthy adult.