

## MAKING YOUR OWN BABY FOOD

Making your own baby food is less expensive and you get to choose exactly what you are feeding your baby. It may be difficult to get food as smooth as store-bought “first foods” or “Stage 1” foods, but for most babies, that is not a problem.

- All utensils, counters, equipment, and hands MUST be clean.
- Clean food well before cooking.
- The food should be fresh and properly cooked.
- Consider using organic fruits and vegetables to reduce the chance of pesticide residue. (See below for the foods which are most and least likely to have pesticides).
- Cook the food with as little water as possible so you don't throw out vitamins. You can use less water by cooking food in the Microwave. Use cooking water to puree the food.
- Puree food by hand or in a blender, food processor or grinder. At first, most babies prefer very smooth, thin food, but gradually enjoy thicker, lumpier foods, especially after 6-8 months of age.
- Nitrates in foods. Nitrates are dangerous to very young (under 3 months old) babies. However, babies this young should not be eating food. (A more common source of dangerous levels of nitrates is in contaminated well-water. This can cause toxic levels if used to make baby formula). Use vegetables that are as fresh as possible, because nitrate levels increase with storage. Fresh frozen fruits and vegetables are often more “fresh” than ones sitting in the produce section. Organic vegetables are grown with no nitrate fertilizer, so should have lower nitrate levels.

The Environmental Working Group's **Dirty Dozen** (tested highest in levels of pesticides):

These are the 12 fruits and vegetables that tested highest in levels of pesticides when tested by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the FDA. Consider buying organic which means no pesticides are used. (<http://www.ewg.org/foodnews/summary.php>)

Peaches	Spinach	Pears	Sweet bell peppers
Strawberries	Nectarines	Cherries	Lettuce
Apples	Celery	Potatoes	Imported grapes

Foods that tested **lowest** in pesticide residues:

Onions	Pineapples	Frozen peas	Cabbage
Avocados	Mangoes	Kiwi	Broccoli
Frozen corn	Asparagus	Bananas	Papaya

This website is very helpful for making homemade baby food: [www.wholesomebabyfood.com](http://www.wholesomebabyfood.com)