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The Super Baby Food Diet

A Super Healthy Diet for Your Super Baby

The *Super Baby Food Diet* is an extremely healthy diet composed of only whole, natural foods. It is based on these major components: whole grain cereals, vegetables and fruits, yogurt and other dairy products, eggs, nuts, seeds, and legumes. Pediatricians and nutritionists agree that a semi-vegetarian diet (a *lacto-ovo* diet containing milk products and eggs) fulfills all of your growing baby's nutritional requirements.

You may recognize these foods as being those from the “new” food groups, the new “optimal diet” groups. The old food groups were meats, breads and cereals, milk and other dairy foods, and vegetables and fruits. The new optimal diet groups are similar, except that other high protein foods or “meat alternatives” have been added to the protein group: legumes, nuts, and seeds. The meat alternatives usually contain fewer pesticides, hormones, and other toxins than meats, and most of them do not have the sometimes-fatal problem of bacterial contamination (*E. coli*, salmonella). Nuts and seeds contain the healthy unsaturated fats that your baby needs for development, especially brain development, without the gobs of unhealthy saturated fats found in meats.

How Do I Keep Track of All the Foods My Baby Needs?

The table on the next page lists the major food groups in the diet with a suggested minimum number of daily food servings from each food group. You may be wondering how a busy parent could possibly keep track of all these requirements. Well, the *Super Baby Food Diet* makes it very easy—I promise! Even your babysitter will think so. You will see how as you read through this chapter.

The Super Baby Food Diet	
Food Group and Servings	Best Super Baby Food Sources and Approximate Portion Sizes for a One-Year-Old
Grain Group grains, cereals, breads, pasta 4 servings per day	<p>½-¾ cup cooked whole grains, ie. <i>Super Baby Porridge</i></p> <p>½ cup dry whole grain cereal (Cheerios®, etc.)</p> <p>½ slice 100% whole grain bread</p> <p>½ cup whole grain pasta or noodles</p> <p>1-2 tablespoons wheat germ</p>
Legume Group beans, legumes, nuts, seeds 2-3 servings per day	<p>⅛ cup (2 tablespoons) dry beans/legumes or ¼ cup cooked beans/legumes, ie. <i>Super Baby Porridge</i></p> <p>1-2 tablespoons ground nuts and/or seeds</p> <p>1-2 tablespoons nut butter or seed butter</p> <p>½ cup ground seed sprouts</p> <p>1 ounce tofu</p>
Dairy Group 4 servings per day for a total of 24 ounces or daily amount for child's age	<p>½-¾ cup milk: ie. breast, formula, whole, 2%, or calcium and vitamin D fortified soybean or brown rice milk</p> <p>½ cup yogurt *</p> <p>⅔ cup cottage cheese</p> <p>¾ ounce natural cheese</p>
Vegetable/ Fruit Group 4-6 servings per day	<p>1 or more <i>Super Green Veggies</i> **</p> <p>1 vitamin C fruit or juice ***</p> <p>½ vitamin A (orange/yellow) veggie (or 1 every other day)</p> <p>2 or more other vegetables and fruits</p>
Eggs 3-4 servings per week	<p>½ hard-cooked egg or 1 egg every other day or a scrambled egg, cooked solid</p>
Miscellaneous Nutritional Enhancers as often as once per meal	<p>These nutritional enhancers can be mixed into cereal, yogurt, cottage cheese, and mashed veggies/fruits: nutritional yeast, flaxseed (linseed) oil, powdered kelp, blackstrap molasses, and foods listed as part of other groups above (wheat germ, mashed cooked beans, ground nuts/seeds, tahini, sprouts, tofu, and soybean grits/flour)</p>

* Yogurt here means plain yogurt, no sugar, organic if possible!

** Serving size of vegetable is 2-4 tablespoons or 1-2 food cubes.

*** Serving size of fruits is ¼-½ of a fresh fruit, ½-1 cup of raw fruit pieces, or ¼-½ cup juice.

The Super Baby Food Diet Grows with Your Baby

The previous table shows the approximate portion sizes for a 12-month-old baby. A younger baby will eat slightly smaller portions, a toddler will eat slightly larger portions. *The number of portions remains the same for all ages; it's the serving size that varies.* For example, a 6-month-old baby may eat a ¼ cup of *Super Porridge* cereal, a 9-month-old may eat a ½ cup, and a 14-month-old may eat a full cup. But, as the table says, all three babies should have 4 servings of grains each day. The required portions from the different food groups help promote a balanced diet.

My Baby Doesn't Eat That Much!

You may be thinking to yourself, “Let's get real! No real-life baby eats three squares a day!” I hear you, and you're right. Most parents are lucky if their baby (or toddler) eats two good meals a day. In fact, many babies live on one good meal a day, one OK meal a day, breast milk or formula, and maybe a few snacks. If your baby is one of them, the *Super Baby Food Diet* is compatible with his eating habits. As you read the rest of this chapter, you will see that the *Super Porridge Main Meal* works as the one good daily meal, the yogurt meal can be the OK meal, and *Super Snacks* or the third meal can pick up any slack.

Two Well-planned Quick and Easy Meals Per Day

The *Super Baby Food Diet* is based on two main meals a day, a few *Super Snacks*, and a third meal for older babies who eat more food. Even though I call them “main” meals, they are relatively small amounts of food compared to our adult-sized meals. Because baby's stomachs are small, they do well when they eat small amounts of food—mini-meals and snacks—frequently throughout the day. The *Super Baby Food Diet* lends itself to this style of eating.

Each meal is very quick and easy to make. In fact, any given meal takes less than three minutes to prepare! Of course, this assumes that you have done some advance preparation and refrigerating/freezing of foods.

The first main meal is based on *Super Porridge*, the second main meal is based on yogurt, and the other meal and snacks vary from day to day. *Super Porridge* and yogurt, along with being extremely healthy foods alone, are great base mixtures to which dozens of other foods can be added, from

puréed veggies to wheat germ and ground nuts/seeds. Keep yogurt and cooked *Super Porridge* ready in the refrigerator, and you can whip up a complete *Super Baby Meal* in minutes.

The next table is an example of a daily feeding schedule for a baby on the *Super Baby Food Diet* who is at least 9 months old.

Sample Daily Feeding Schedule for The Super Baby Food Diet	
Upon Awakening	breast or bottle
Breakfast	a main meal based on <i>Super Porridge</i>
Morning Snack	Super Snack
Lunch	a main meal based on yogurt
Afternoon Snack	Super Snack
Supper	a meal that varies from day to day
Bedtime	breast or bottle of water
Plus water after and between meals.	

A Healthy Diet Must Have a Variety of Foods

From the schedule above, it seems that the *Super Baby Food Diet* is the same foods every day. This is not true. *Super Porridge* can be made from dozens of combinations of different cereal grains (brown rice, millet, barley, oatmeal, etc.) and legumes (soybeans, split peas, lentils, kidney beans, etc.). So *Super Porridge* is actually a large variety of foods, even though you cook it the same way no matter what grain and legume you choose. The only exception is *Super Porridge* with soybeans, which will be explained later.

With regard to the yogurt meal, it is true that the yogurt stays the same from day to day. But it is good to eat yogurt every day, and some experts recommend it because of its superb health-giving properties. Even though the yogurt part remains the same, the yogurt meal is still varied due to the other foods and additions to the yogurt that change from day to day. Also, yogurt does not necessarily have to be made from cow's milk. Soy milks (fortified with calcium and vitamin D) and other non-dairy fortified milks can be used as a base for yogurt.

Super Porridge — The Super Baby's Super Cereal

You will frequently see the cereal named *Super Porridge* in the *Super Baby Food Diet*. I call it *Super Porridge* because it is. *Super Porridge* is a cereal made from brown rice or other whole grains. Just as whole grains should be a major part of an adult's diet, *Super Porridge* is the foundation food of the *Super Baby Food Diet*. It is very easy to make—you can make 2-3 days' worth in about 10 minutes. When your baby is 9 months old, you can add beans/legumes to the porridge to make it a complete protein baby cereal.

The Main Meal of the Day — Super Porridge

The main meal of the *Super Baby Food Diet* is outlined in the next box. I fed my baby this meal around 8 or 9 in the morning, after I had gotten the older kids off to school. The baby can wait to eat his breakfast because the milk feeding he drank upon awakening tides him over through the early morning.

The Super Porridge Main Meal

- ½-1 cup of *Super Porridge* cereal
- Either one vitamin A veggie cube or 1 mashed hard-cooked egg (depending on whether it's an egg day) mixed into the *Super Porridge*
- ½-1 teaspoon nutritional yeast mixed into *Super Porridge*
- 1-2 Super Green Veggie food cubes
- Vitamin C source (2-4 ounces of juice or ½ fruit)
- Prescription vitamin drops and iron supplement drops
- Maybe a pinch of kelp and ½-1 teaspoon of desiccated liver (optional)

Preparation Time: 3-4 Minutes

The main meal includes eggs. The *Super Baby Food Diet* includes 3-4 eggs per week. Every second day, a mashed hard-cooked egg is mixed into your baby's *Super Porridge*.

TIP: A good way to keep track of when to include an egg is to go by the day of the week. In our house, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays are "egg days." Most weeks, my baby also gets a fourth egg during the weekend.

On the days that are not egg days, a vitamin A veggie cube is included in the main meal in place of the egg. Sweet potatoes and carrots are so high in beta-carotene that one food cube every two days, plus a daily Super Green Veggie, supplies all of your baby's vitamin A needs.

Preparation Instructions for Super Porridge Main Meal

This entire meal can be mixed in a single bowl, with the exception of the juice, of course. Start by removing a bowl of previously cooked *Super Porridge* from your refrigerator. Remove the Super Green and orange veggie cubes from the freezer and push them into the porridge in the bowl. Thaw the porridge and cubes in a saucepan on the stove for 1½-2½ minutes (or for the amount of time needed). Meanwhile, peel and mash the egg. While mashing, look carefully at the center of the yolk to make sure that it is cooked solid. Prepare fruit or juice. Get the vitamin drops and iron drops ready if recommended by your pediatrician. Get the nutritional yeast ready to be stirred into the porridge.

TIME SAVER: I keep the nutritional yeast bottle (and other nutritional enhancers, such as the desiccated liver bottle and kelp shaker) in an easy-to-reach cabinet, so that it takes me only seconds to open and spoon them into the porridge on the counter directly below the cabinet.

TIP: Keep your baby's vitamins on a surface that you can reach from the feeding area, but out of baby's reach. This way you won't forget them and then have to jump up for them in the middle of the meal.

TIME SAVER: When you are preparing a batch of veggie cubes, mix a few days' worth of Super Green Veggie cubes in with a few days' worth of vitamin A orange veggie cubes in the same small freezer bag. It's easier in the morning to find, open, and close only one freezer bag instead of two.

An Alternate Preparation Method

With above preparation, veggies are mixed in with the *Super Porridge* in the same bowl. If you prefer to feed your baby the veggies in a different bowl than the one with the porridge, so that your baby can enjoy the flavors separately, follow these preparation steps:

Warm *Super Porridge* from the refrigerator on the stove top for a few minutes. Meanwhile, peel egg. Thaw food cubes on the stove top in a separate pot for a few minutes. Place *Super Porridge* in a bowl. While veggies cook, mash egg (look closely to ensure that it's completely cooked) and mix into porridge. Stir nutritional yeast into porridge. Prepare fruit or juice. Get vitamin drops and iron drops ready.

Vitamin and Iron Supplements Should Be Given with the Main Meal

No nutrient works alone. Vitamin supplements work together with the nutrients in food to supply your baby's nutritional needs. Supplements should not be given on an empty stomach. If your pediatrician has advised you to give your baby prescription vitamin drops and/or iron drops, drop them into your baby's mouth in the middle of the *Super Porridge Main Meal* spoonfuls. Don't feed them at the end of the meal, or a coating will be left on the teeth. Alternatively, you can mix the drops into the *Super Porridge* if you are confident he will eat it all.

Vitamin C and Iron Go Together

Vitamin C must be included in this main meal because it helps absorption of the iron from the egg, yeast, and porridge. To remind you of this, the column title in the *Super Baby Food Diet Daily Worksheet* on page 38 reads "Egg + Vitamin C." If your baby's vitamin drops contain vitamin C, you can leave out the fruit or juice from the main meal, especially if your baby is not old enough yet to eat the entire meal.

Nutritional Yeast

Brewer's yeast, torula yeast, and nutritional yeast are nutritional supplement powders or flakes that are high in protein, the B vitamins, trace elements, and other nutrients. Nutritional yeast is consistently one of the top suppliers for the major nutrients, especially the B vitamins and trace elements. Taking a few seconds to add a little nutritional yeast into your baby's morning *Super Porridge* gives it a super nutrition boost. Brewer's

yeast does not contain vitamin B12, a nutrient which is sometimes lacking in strict vegetarian diets, so I recommend nutritional yeast instead.

WARNING: Do not use the yeast for baking breads as a nutritional supplement. If you are not familiar with nutritional yeast, ask your natural foods store employee to help you find it.

Desiccated Liver Powder

If your baby is not a vegetarian, add a little desiccated liver powder (½-1 teaspoon) into the *Super Porridge* along with the nutritional yeast. It contains many trace minerals and iron, and the fact that it is meat will also help iron absorption.

Kelp

Keep a salt shaker with kelp near the nutritional yeast and put just a pinch of it into your baby's *Super Porridge* each morning.

Don't Give Your Baby Milk with the Main Meal

What's obviously missing in the *Super Porridge Main Meal*? Milk. I don't recommend giving milk with this meal for two reasons. First, milk is very filling and your baby may not be able to finish eating the other foods. Second, some studies have shown that calcium binds with iron, and therefore decreases the iron available to your baby. Foods from the dairy group are the easiest to supply to your baby—it's as easy as pouring a glass of formula or breastfeeding—and you can get the required amount in before the end of the day with no trouble.

The Main Meal Gets Your Baby's Day Off to a SUPER START

In my opinion, if you've fed your baby a *Super Porridge Main Meal* this morning, you've already given her more good food and nutrition than that which exists in a whole day's worth of the typical American baby's diet.

Once you get some practice keeping *Super Porridge* in the refrigerator and Super Green veggie food cubes in the freezer, you will realize how little time and money it takes to feed your baby a super healthy homemade diet. With the size of this chapter, you'd swear I was documenting a mission to

Mars. It takes longer to read about how to make the *Super Baby Food Diet's Main Meal* than it does to actually make the meal!

After I give my baby the main meal each morning, I have a real feeling of accomplishment. I get this wonderful sense of security and fulfillment after he finishes eating, because I know that he has had almost all of his required nutrients for the entire day. I hope that you have the same experience with your baby every morning—the feeling that “I done good!”

Once your baby has finished eating the main meal, you can coast for the rest of the day. Feeding your baby will consist of a super easy second main meal based on yogurt, a few Super Snacks, and maybe a third meal.

The Super Baby Food Diet Daily Worksheet

The *Super Baby Food Diet Daily Worksheet* on page 38 is an easy way to keep track of your baby's daily requirements for the food groups. Please look at it carefully, and compare it to the *Super Baby Food Diet Table* on page 20. The worksheet and the table go hand in hand. Note two things:

1. The foods groups in the diet match the columns in the worksheet.
2. The minimum daily servings in the table match the numbers in the bottom row of the worksheet labeled “Suggested Daily Servings.”

Ignore the protein combo column for now. The *Super Baby Food Diet* supplies your baby with more than enough protein.

It's simple to use the worksheet. You could probably figure it out by looking at the sample menu and worksheet on pages 38-41. Just fill in the foods your baby eats during the day and place the number of food servings that each food supplies in the column under the proper food group heading. At the end of the day, total up the numbers and compare your totals with the minimum number of servings in the bottom row of the table.

REMINDER: The worksheet is meant to ensure that your baby is getting a proper balance of foods from the main food groups so that there are no nutritional deficiencies in his diet. There's no need to be a slave to it. It is just a tool to help identify a possible weakness in the variety of foods you're feeding your baby.

The Dairy Column of the Worksheet

The bottom total for the minimum daily servings for the dairy column depends on your baby's age. Before your baby is one year old, he should be drinking the amount of breast milk/formula recommended for his age. After your baby is one year old, he should be drinking at least 24 ounces of cow's milk (or fortified soy milk or other equivalent milk product) to meet his calcium and vitamin D requirements.

Milk (Calcium) Equivalents

These milk products have the approximate calcium equivalent of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup or 4 ounces of milk:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup yogurt
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup cottage cheese
- 4 ounces tofu (calcium coagulated)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce of natural cheese
- 1-inch cube of cheddar cheese
- 2 tablespoons of cream cheese
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup ice cream

Vegetables and Fruits Must Supply Vitamins C and A

One of the fruits/vegetables that you feed your baby each day must be high in vitamin C. Kiwi fruit, orange juice, and to a lesser extent, broccoli, kale, and the other foods listed in the vitamin C table in the Appendix. Because vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin, it must be supplied every single day.

Vitamin A (or more correctly, beta-carotene) must also be regularly included in your baby's diet and is found in sweet potatoes, carrots, broccoli, and kale, among others. Because vitamin A is fat-soluble, and therefore able to be stored in the body, it's OK to skip a vitamin A food cube once in a while. This is why it is OK to have a vitamin A food serving every second day and alternate it with an egg, which contains some vitamin A. The Super Green Veggies that you feed your baby every day contain significant amounts of beta-carotene, as can be seen in the vitamin A table. If you give your baby two veggie food cubes, don't forget to double the numbers in the

table, because the 2 tablespoon serving size used in the nutrient tables is equal to only a single food cube.

REMINDER: Make sure that your baby is getting a nice variety of fruits and vegetables. For example, if he eats a lot of bananas and grape juice and no other veggies or fruits, he is probably not getting his nutritional requirements met. A variety of foods are one key to a healthy diet. There are columns specifically for vitamin A and vitamin C fruits/veggies in the worksheet on page 38 to help you keep track of these two important nutrients.

The Super Baby Food Group Quick Reference Table

The *Super Baby Food Quick Reference Table* on page 39 will help to remind you which foods fit into which food groups. Note that there is a box in the table for each column in the worksheet. Many of the foods fit into more than one food group. For example, flax seeds, tahini, and tofu contain some calcium. Therefore, these foods help to fill the requirements for the dairy group, even though we don't count them there. Milk alone can be counted as a complete protein, but it fits best under dairy. You needn't be concerned with these overlaps because they ensure that nutrient needs are being met. Be concerned only when requirements are not being met, according to the number of suggested daily servings in the bottom row of the table.

You have my permission to make copies for personal use (so you don't have to worry about copyright infringements) of the worksheet on page 38 and the reference table on page 39. The reference and worksheet are purposely juxtaposed so that you can copy both together on one 8½ x 11 sheet of standard paper. Also, the worksheets are available for easy download on the *Super Baby Food* web site. (www.superbabyfood.com)

REMINDER: Keep your completed worksheets for discussion with your pediatrician. Your pediatrician should be aware of and approve of the diet you are feeding your baby.

Writing the Super Porridge Meal into the Worksheet

The main meal is a very important part of the *Super Baby Food Diet*, therefore detailed examples on how to write it into the worksheet are shown on pages 38-41. The *Super Porridge Meal* is shown as the breakfast

part of the worksheet on page 38. The identical breakfast part of the worksheet is shown enlarged on page 43 for easy comparison with the box on page 40. Note that the worksheet is an easier method of writing the same information in the box.

If you look at the full sample worksheet on page 41, you will see that the *Super Porridge Main Meal* makes significant contributions to those minimum suggested daily serving totals in the bottom row.

TIP: Ask your babysitter to write into the worksheet any meals s/he gives your baby, and you can easily keep track of his diet.

The Second Main Meal

The Second Meal Is Based on Yogurt

Give your baby yogurt almost every day as part of a second main meal. You can sometimes use cottage cheese instead of yogurt, which is very high in complete protein ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup supplies 14 grams of complete protein), but it also has a lot of sodium. Yogurt is preferable because it contains the friendly bacteria so necessary for intestinal health. Yogurt's beneficial bacteria also promote the production of B vitamins in your baby's intestines. This, along with the fiber in the whole grains and legumes in their diets, may be the reason why my babies never got diarrhea or constipation. I realized this one day when my sons and I were watching television and a commercial was shown for the pink stuff used to treat diarrhea. One of my sons turned to me and said, "What's diarrhea?" It's been several years and they still have never experienced it, or constipation either. From what I hear about leaky diarrhea-filled diapers, I consider myself very fortunate.

While I'm bragging about my healthy kids, I'd also like to boast that they are very rarely sick. I was surprised when I read that the average child has 5 to 10 illnesses a year! In fact, my son once complained to me, "How come we never get to stay home sick like everyone else in our class does?" Well, I confess that we now play hooky occasionally to simply enjoy a day off from school—we can afford it! I claim that *Super Baby Food Diet*, with yogurt and *Super Porridge* from whole grains and legumes as its foundation foods, promotes super immune systems in children. Now, I realize that three kids is not a statistically significant number for a scientifically accurate medical

study, but I still say it's the *Super Baby Food*. Let some scientist prove me wrong!

Like *Super Porridge*, yogurt is great base for other foods and nutritional enhancers. Yogurt is a good source of complete protein alone, but mixing yogurt with some other foods increases the amount of complete protein. A yogurt-based lunch is also a great way to get the one or two daily servings of ground nuts or seeds into your baby's diet.

MONEY SAVER: Homemade yogurt costs a small fraction of commercial yogurt. And it's so darn easy to make! See instructions beginning on page 298.

If Your Baby is Allergic to Milk

If your baby has a milk allergy, not to worry, your baby can still have the health benefits of yogurt. Buy yogurt made with soy milk or other milk instead of cow's milk. If you can't find this kind of yogurt, buy soy milk, brown rice milk, almond milk, oat milk, or some other non-cow's milk and make your own yogurt—it's just as easy as making yogurt from cow's milk.

Preparation Instructions for a Super Yogurt Meal

First, place frozen veggie food cubes in a pot over low heat to thaw. Second, spoon any whole seeds or nuts into your blender container. Start the blender. Meanwhile, spoon approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of yogurt into a bowl. Stop the blender and mix the ground seeds/nuts into the yogurt. (Note that you grind only the nuts/seeds in the blender—don't put the yogurt in the blender, or some gets wasted and the container is more difficult to clean.) Add any other ingredients that need no preparation, such as tahini, wheat germ, etc. Last, mix the veggie cubes, which have finished thawing on the stove top, into the yogurt. If the veggie cubes get too hot, let them cool first before adding to the yogurt or the heat will kill some of the yogurt's beneficial bacteria. You may want to place the veggies in a separate bowl so that your baby can taste the individual flavors. If you use a second bowl, you can mix some of the ingredients listed on the next page into the yogurt and some into the veggies for more variety.

A Quick and Easy Yogurt Meal

To make a meal out of yogurt for your little one, simply spoon about ½-1 cup of plain yogurt into a bowl. Add one or more of these:

- ½-1 teaspoon of well-ground flax seeds
- Avocado or avocado frozen food cubes (thawed first)
- 1 tablespoon tahini
- 1 teaspoon or more of ground pumpkin seeds or other seeds
- 1 teaspoon or more of ground almonds, walnuts, filberts, cashews, or other nuts
- ½ of one ground Brazil nut
- 1 tablespoon of thinned peanut butter or other nut butter softened for a few seconds on the stove top over lowest heat.
- 1-2 tablespoons wheat germ
- 1-2 vitamin A veggie cubes (sweet potato, carrots, etc.)
- Other veggie cube(s)
- Puréed or fork-mashed ripe banana, peach, kiwi, or other fruit
- Cooked beans, with skins removed and mashed or pureed, or frozen bean food cubes made from the same
- Blackstrap molasses
- A jar or part of a jar of commercial baby fruit or veggie or no-sugar applesauce

Preparation time: 2-3 minutes

Yogurt Is a Great Base for the Healthy Fats Your Baby Needs

Almost every single day, I add a little ground flaxseed or flaxseed oil (which are the absolute best sources of the essential fatty acid omega 3; fish oil is not), and at least ½ food cube of avocado (which is another super source of the unsaturated fatty acids) to my baby's yogurt. Babies need fats for proper brain development, and avocado, seeds, nuts, and nut/seed butters are the best sources of the healthy unsaturated fats.

Super Snacks

Super snacks are an important part of the *Super Baby Food Diet*. They are healthy foods that add nutrients and calories. Follow all instructions to prevent choking beginning on page 337.

Super Snacks Are Real Food

With regard to a baby's or toddler's diet, the word "snack" is a misnomer. We adults tend to think of snacks as sweet little bits of foods that we eat for enjoyment more than to assuage hunger or to provide nutrition. This is not true for your baby or toddler. Snacks should NOT be thought of as "extras" or "treats" for your baby, but as a necessary part of his daily diet that adds calories and nutrition. Snacks may provide your baby/toddler with 20-25% of his daily calories and other nutrients. Because your baby's stomach is quite small, it cannot hold very much at one time, and therefore your baby must eat small amounts of food frequently throughout the day. Snacks fill the need for food in the time stretch between meals and should be as nutritious as baby's main meals. You shouldn't worry that snacks will spoil your baby's appetite for a meal, because snacks are small healthy meals! However, if your baby is hungry and it's near a main mealtime, you may want to skip the snack and move up the time of the main meal.

WARNING: The foods we consider snacks—potato chips, cookies, cheese twists, candy—should be NO part of your baby's diet. Besides the obvious lack of any nutritional value, most of these snack "foods" are choking hazards for babies and toddlers.

Snacks should be offered at scheduled, predictable times every day and not at random. As hard as it is not to do this, snacks should not be given to a baby/toddler to keep him quiet while you're on the phone or because he is bored. Keep his favorite DVD at the ready or a favorite toy handy instead. Snacks should be eaten in the feeding area, as main meals are, because they ARE meals.

Until your baby becomes proficient at feeding himself, you will be spoon-feeding him his main meals, which will give him most of his daily nutrition. Snacks should consist mostly of finger foods, to allow your baby to practice his self-feeding skills. Ideas for healthy Super Snacks are listed

in the recipes in Part VI. Although the Super Snack list may not appeal to you as tasty snacks, remember that they are not meant to be treats or luxuries, but a necessary nutritional part of your baby's daily diet.

TIP: Use an egg slicer to slice pieces of finger food, like hard-cooked eggs and cooked mashed balls of food. A pastry blender will cut soft food into small pieces in no time. A pizza cutter can be used to quickly slice up whole grain bread, French toast, tofu, and fruits and veggies for baby. Be careful that food pieces are not windpipe size, which would be a choking hazard. Cut round foods, such as bananas and hot dogs, lengthwise before slicing.

TIP: Bond with your child while he's snacking. Sit down with him and use a butter knife to spread the fruit slices with the nut butter one at a time, and hand each to your child. They like watching you prepare each piece and it makes you feel very nurturing.

TIP: Toddlers think it's fun to pull string cheese with you.

Batch Preparing and Freezing Super Snacks

Some super snacks, like Cheerios[®], need no preparation. But snacks like cooked vegetable pieces do, and they can be prepared in a large batch and frozen to save time and energy. Prepare and cook according to the directions in Part III. To prevent them from freezing together into one big clump, use the *Tray-Freeze Method* and *Nested Plastic Bag Method* of freezing foods. Actually, there's no need to cook snacks separately. Whenever you cook vegetables, save a few finger food-sized pieces and freeze for Super Snacks.

The Super Snack Freezer Bag

In my freezer, I have one large freezer bag known as THE SUPER SNACK BAG, which contains several inner plastic bags (*Nested Plastic Bag Method*) of batch-prepared Super Snacks: cooked veggie pieces, ripe fruit pieces, small tofu chunks, beans with skins removed, and bags of different Toddler Hors d'oeuvres. I remove several of them from the freezer bag the night before I serve them and place them in a covered bowl in the refrigerator. When it comes time for the babysitter or me to give them to the baby, they're thawed and ready.

Super Snacks — Finger Foods

- SOFT pieces or wedges of ripe peeled and cored fruit: peaches, mango, papaya, watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew, banana, pears, cucumber with seeds removed
- SOFT pieces of cooked, diced vegetables: broccoli florets, sweet potato sticks, or cooked white/sweet potatoes rolled into balls
- Raw carrot, grated fine (bigger carrot pieces are choking hazards)
- Small tofu chunks
- Beans cooked until very soft with skins removed
- Peas cooked until soft and smashed slightly with a fork (for older babies only)
- Oatios® or another health food store equivalent of Cheerios®
- Other whole grain and unsugared dry boxed cereal, but with no nut pieces or any hard pieces that can cause choking
- Crumbled egg pieces, cooked solid or scrambled
- Small pieces of soft cheese
- Small lumps of cottage cheese
- Cooked brown rice and other grains
- Whole grain crackers
- Well-cooked small pasta pieces
- Whole grain bread, cut into toast fingers or small pieces
- A whole bagel makes a good teething ring
- Bits of French toast, cooked thoroughly so no raw egg
- Whole grain pancakes
- Toddler Hors d'oeuvres (Chapter 36)
- Ripe, soft apple pieces or crackers topped with grated or sliced cheese and broiled in the toaster oven to melt the cheese.
- Any soft, ripe fruit, such as banana or apple, sliced and spread with thinned peanut butter or other nut butter. Mix freshly ground pumpkin and flax seeds into the nut butter before spreading.
- Make a mash of any combination of ingredients above, form into small balls and other little shapes and serve as finger foods.

TIP: Those infant feeding dishes with the separate compartments are perfect for storing one day's worth of different finger foods—soft cooked carrot pieces for a morning snack in one part, an afternoon snack of diced peaches in another part, and shredded cheese in the third.

WARNING: Make sure that the food pieces are completely thawed, because frozen foods are choking hazards. Transfer them from the freezer to a warm part of the refrigerator **THE NIGHT BEFORE**, and they'll surely be thawed by snack time the next day.

WARNING: Once these little food pieces are thawed, don't keep them for more than one day in the refrigerator. Throw them out that same day.

All Snacks Can Be Batch Prepared and Frozen

It takes only a few minutes to prepare Super Snacks like tofu chunks (just cut them up) and ripe and soft fruit pieces (wash, peel, and dice), and you can prepare them immediately before feeding to your baby. But it will save time if you batch prepare and freeze them. Freezing them in batches may also help prevent food waste, because once a block of tofu is opened, or a large fruit is cut up, they must be eaten soon if they are stored in the refrigerator. Your baby probably doesn't eat enough to use them before they would spoil.

The Third Meal

All babies are different. A baby can begin eating three meals a day as early as 6 months or as late as 10 months. When your baby is ready for a third meal, you will be able to tell because he acts hungry! Here are some ideas for an additional meal.

Another Super Porridge Meal

For a second *Super Porridge Meal*, instead of mixing in nutritional yeast and a mashed egg/vitamin A cube as you did in the main meal at breakfast, you can add any of the nutritional enhancers listed on page 20 or any food you might add to yogurt. Mix them into the *Super Porridge* bowl or feed from a separate bowl, so that your baby can taste them individually.

Sandwiches and Crackers

As your baby gets older, you can give him meals that require more advanced eating skills than *Super Porridge* that will supply him with as much nutrition. For instance, instead of using *Super Porridge* as a base for nutritional enhancers, spread the enhancers into a sandwich made from 100% whole grain bread or spread them on whole-grain crackers.

Sandwiches are quick and easy to make, especially if you use easy sandwich spreads like tahini, thinned peanut butter, yogurt cheese, other cheeses, prune butter, and hummus. When I make sandwich spreads like hummus, I always make and freeze a batch using the *Food Cube Method*. One cube is the perfect size for a sandwich.

Buy 100% whole grain crackers or make your own. Use the sandwich spreads or a dip like avocado dip for the crackers.

Pasta

Whole grain organic pastas can be found at most supermarkets. Don't use pasta made from white wheat flour from the supermarket. Mix cooked, drained whole grain pastas with just about anything: easy-to-make homemade Super Pasta Sauce (store-bought jars are much too high in sodium), cheese, veggie food cubes, or even sandwich spreads. Sprinkle nutritional enhancers like ground nuts/seeds and a little nutritional yeast in the dish immediately before serving. Pasta is a dish that can be frozen in individual portions and thawed on the stove top for a quick and easy meal. Why pay so much money for the commercial brands of frozen dinners or canned junk made with refined flours and loaded with salt, sugar, and additives? Make a few extra portions and freeze them yourself.

Toddler Recipes

When your baby grows into a toddler, there are hundreds of easy recipes included in this book, some of which the rest of the family will enjoy as well.

A Sample Daily Menu

On page 40 you will find a sample of a full daily menu from the *Super Baby Food Diet*. It's for an older baby or toddler as you can see by the portion sizes. On the page opposite the menu (page 41), there is an example of how you would fill in the worksheet for the sample menu.

The Super Baby Food Diet Daily Worksheet						
Date:						
Other Snacks	Supper	Afternoon Snack	Lunch	Morning Snack	Breakfast	
						Grains
						Legumes
						Nuts/Seeds*
						Dairy
						Super Green Veg
						Vitamin C Fruit/Veg
						Vitamin A Fruit/Veg
						Other Fruit/Veg
						Enhancers
						Egg + Vitamin C
						Vitamin Drops
						Iron Drops
						Protein Combination
Actual Servings Eaten by Baby						
Suggested Daily Servings						
						4+
						1 to 2
						1 to 2
						24 oz+
						1
						1
						1/2
						2
						1+
						1/2
						1
						1
						2+

* Only if no nut allergy

Quick Reference for Super Baby Food Groups		
<p>Whole Grains</p> <p><i>Super Porridge</i> and other whole grain cereals Whole grain flour Whole grain bread Whole grain pasta Wheat germ Oatios/Cheerios® Whole grain muffins, crackers, bread sticks</p>	<p>Legumes</p> <p><i>Super Porridge</i> made with legumes Tofu Soybeans/soy grits Other beans Lentils Split peas Soybean milk (peanuts are actually legumes)</p>	<p>Nuts and Seeds</p> <p>Ground flax seeds Ground seeds Ground nuts Tahini Other seed butters Peanut butter Other nut butters Nut/seed milks Sunflower seed sprouts and other sprouts</p>
<p>Super Green Veggies</p> <p>Kale Broccoli Greens (beet, turnip, dandelion, mustard, collard) Brussels sprouts Asparagus Swiss chard Okra Peas (edible pod) Spinach</p>	<p>Vitamin C Veg/Fruits</p> <p>Orange/orange juice Other citrus fruit/juice Kiwi fruit Papaya Tomatoes Cantaloupe Strawberries Brussels sprouts Broccoli Sweet green peppers</p>	<p>Vitamin A Veg/Fruits</p> <p>Sweet potatoes Carrots Pumpkin Kale Cantaloupe Peaches, nectarines Apricots Winter squash Mango Spinach</p>
<p>Other Fruits/Veggies</p> <p>Avocado, Bananas Apples, Pears, Plums Pineapple, Berries Honeydew melon, Watermelon Green beans Cabbage, Cauliflower Beets, Turnips White potatoes Tomatoes/sauce</p>	<p>Dairy</p> <p>Cow's milk: whole or 2% Yogurt, whole milk Soy milk, fortified Cottage cheese Natural cheese</p>	<p>Enhancers</p> <p>Nutritional yeast Flaxseed/linseed oil Wheat germ Ground nuts/seeds Ground sprouts Desiccated liver Blackstrap molasses Powdered kelp</p>

Sample Daily Menu of Super Baby Food Diet	
Upon awakening	Breast feed or bottle of formula
Breakfast Preparation time: 3 minutes	¾ cup <i>Super Porridge</i> cereal made from whole grain millet and soy grits mixed with 1 mashed hard-cooked egg and 1 teaspoon nutritional yeast 2 broccoli cubes ½ cup fresh squeezed orange juice Prescription vitamin drops Iron drops
Mid Morning Snack Preparation time: 1 minute	½ cup Oatios (the organic, natural foods store equivalent of Cheerios®) Small, soft pieces of cooked carrot from the Super Snack Freezer Bag (page 34) Breast feed or ½ cup (4 oz) formula
Lunch Preparation time: 2½ minutes	½ cup whole milk yogurt mixed with 1 tablespoon tahini and 1 teaspoon ground flaxseed Avocado cubes Breast feed or ½ cup formula
Mid Afternoon Snack Preparation time: 1 minute	Ripe kiwi fruit, cut into small pieces for finger food or spoon fed directly from peel ½ slice whole wheat bread broken into small pieces for finger food Breast feed or ½ cup formula
Supper Preparation time: 2 minutes	¾ cup <i>Super Porridge</i> cereal made from brown rice and lentils mixed with a small mashed banana and Breast feed or ½ cup formula
Bedtime	Breast feed or bottle of formula
Plus a 1-2 tablespoons water after each meal and between meals.	

Example of Completed Super Baby Food Diet Daily Worksheet for Menu on Previous Page													
	Grains	Legumes	Nut/Seeds	Dairy	Super Green Veg	Vitamin C Fruit/Veg	Vitamin A Fruit/Veg	Other Fruit/Veg	Enhancers	Egg + Vit. C	Vitamin Drops	Iron Drops	Protein Combo
Breakfast													
¾ cup <i>Super Porridge</i>	2	1											1
Hard-cooked egg										1			1
Nutritional yeast									1				
Broccoli cubes					1								
Orange Juice						1							
Prescription vitamin drops											1		
Iron supplement drops												1	
Morning Snack													
Oatios or Cheerios®	1												
Carrots							1						
4 oz formula				4									
Lunch													
Yogurt				1									1
Tahini			1										
Flaxseed			1										
Avocado								1					
4 oz formula				4									
Afternoon Snack													
Kiwi fruit						1							
½ slice bread	1												
4 oz formula				4									
Supper													
<i>Super Porridge</i>	2	1											1
Banana								1					
4 oz formula				4									
Other Snacks													
8 oz bottle in morning				8									
8 oz bottle in evening				8									
Actual Servings Eaten	6	2	2	32+1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	4
Suggested Daily Servings	4+	1-2	1-2	24 oz+	1	1	½	2	1+	½	1	1	2+

Compare the numbers in the box below with the numbers in the columns in the worksheet on the previous page and note that they are consistent.

The Super Porridge Main Meal Supplies Foods from Almost All Major Food Groups

The *Main Super Porridge Meal* supplies these food group requirements:

- 2 from **Grains Group** ($2\frac{1}{4}$ cup servings of cooked grains) from the *Super Porridge*. Keep in mind that a $\frac{3}{4}$ serving of *Super Porridge* contains $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ($2\frac{1}{4}$ cups) of cooked grains and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cooked legumes.
- 1 from **Legumes Group** (a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup serving of cooked beans) from the *Super Porridge*.
- 2 or 3 from **Vegetable/Fruit Group** from the Super Green Veggie cube, the vitamin C fruit/juice, and the vitamin A veggie cube if it is not an egg day. And technically, you can count the beans in *Super Porridge* as a vegetable—adding one more serving.
- 1 from **Eggs** if it's an egg day.
- 1 or 2 from **Nutritional Enhancers**, such as nutritional yeast and maybe the desiccated liver.
- 1 or 2 **Protein** servings: The grains + legumes in the *Super Porridge* combine to make complete protein, and the egg every other day is a second protein serving.
- **Iron** is supplied mostly by the iron supplement drops, but there is also some iron in the egg, nutritional yeast, desiccated liver, and the whole grains and legumes in the *Super Porridge*.
- Milk or other foods from the **Dairy Group** should **NOT** be given to your baby in this meal, because calcium binds with iron.

Directions on how to cook *Super Porridge* are given in Chapter 4. But briefly, if your baby is 9 months or older and can have beans and other legumes, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cooked *Super Porridge* cereal is made with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cooked grains and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cooked legumes, which is two $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grain servings and one legume serving.

Enlarged Main Meal Part of the Super Baby Food Diet Daily Worksheet													
Breakfast	Grains	Legumes	Nut/Seeds	Dairy	Super Green Veg	Vitamin C Fruit/Veg	Vitamin A Fruit/Veg	Other Fruit/Veg	Enhancers	Egg + Vitamin C	Vitamin Drops	Iron Drops	Protein Combination
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup Super Porridge	2	1											1
Hard-cooked egg										1			1
Nutritional yeast									1				
Super Green Veggie					1								
Orange Juice						1							
Prescription vitamin drops											1		
Iron supplement drops												1	

Advantages of the Super Baby Food System

An Advantage for You and the Rest of the Family

The *Super Baby Food Diet* is advantageous for meal planning for the rest of your family, too. You have made one or two very special meals for your baby during the day. By suppertime, after your spouse comes home and the kids are home from school, you can concentrate on a meal centered on the rest of the family, and not your baby. Your baby can join the family table. The main meals and *Super Snacks* that your baby has eaten during the day have supplied the vast majority of your baby's daily nutrient requirements.

The Advantage for the Parent Working Outside the Home

I worked three days a week when my twins were babies. The *Super Baby Food Diet* fit in well with the daily routine, because I could get everything ready the night before. I started with a bowl of *Super Porridge* (already made and refrigerated) added some Green Veggie cubes, nutritional yeast, and a mashed egg or orange veggie cube, and put it back in the refrigerator. I also got a yogurt meal ready with some mixed-in nutritional enhancers, and transferred finger foods/snacks from the *Super Snack Freezer Bag* into a partitioned bowl. All of this took only 5 minutes. The babysitter knew that she was supposed to give him vitamin and iron drops with the *Super Porridge*, as well as some orange juice. The babies were on a regular daily eating schedule of healthy *Super Baby Foods*, and the babysitter found it nice and easy to prepare the foods and feed them.

Shopping for the Super Baby Foods

The Supermarket has Everything You Need

You can buy everything you need for the *Super Baby Food Diet* from your local supermarket: brown rice, oatmeal, lentils, split peas, bags of dried beans, vegetables, fruits, eggs, yogurt, and milk. Grocery stores are now expanding their organic and health food sections. It might also be worth it to take a trip to your local natural foods store.

Get Familiar with Your Local Natural Foods Store

A natural foods store has foods that are much healthier for your baby because they are grown organically. Who knows what long-term effects these supposedly safe pesticides will have on your baby (or you for that

matter)? Your baby eats much more food per pound of body weight than we do, so pesticides get more concentrated in her little body. Organic rice and legumes are not much more expensive than those at the supermarket. Compare prices and you will see. New natural food stores are popping up all over the place. Google “health food” with “your town” and you will see all of your options.

Food Shopping Tips

- Shop the inner aisles of the supermarket first and the outer aisles last. I spend a lot of time with coupons comparing prices of toilet paper and spaghetti sauce jars. To prevent broccoli from drooping and frozen juices from melting in my shopping cart while I’m doing math in my head, I don’t put them in the cart until I’m done with the room temperature non-perishables in the inner aisles.
- Run other errands first and save grocery shopping for last. That way ice cream won’t be melting in the back of the minivan while you are stopping at the dry cleaners, at the car wash, and buying stamps at the post office.
- Discard expired coupons from your coupon holder and clip new coupons immediately before a trip to the grocery store and they will be fresh in your mind when you walk those aisles. Valuable coupons about to expire will be discovered. Place them in a coupon pocket labeled It’s now or never! and check this pocket before leaving the store. This prevents the “Oh no! I had a coupon for that and it expired!” phenomenon.
- Use the “bin inventory” method in your home to keep important items in stock. In a special storage bin or closet, place one bar of soap, one roll of toilet paper, one day’s worth of diapers, and one of any non-perishable item that must be kept on hand at all times. When you think you’ve run out, the bin will save you. Note: This method will not work if you do not immediately replace the item in the bin!
- Save grocery receipts with computer-printed prices and item names. Use them to compare for best prices at competing stores.

If this is your first trip to your natural foods store, take a few minutes to check it out. (If you're already a regular customer, skip to the next section.) Walk up and down the aisles looking at the individual items.

By the way, the kind of natural foods store I'm talking about is the local, one room Mom and Pop store, not the "pretend" health food big business store at the mall, which specializes in vitamin jars and cans of protein powders labeled with pictures of gleaming gigantic biceps. From my experience, the people at natural foods stores are knowledgeable in healthy foods and care as much about the quality of their food and your health as their profits. If you let them, they will get to know you and your family as family. One of my local stores let me walk out with \$40 worth of unpaid groceries because I forgot my checkbook, trusting me to pay the next time.

Buy Brown Rice and Millet First

If you are going to follow the *Super Baby Food Diet*, here are the first foods that you should buy, and the order that you will need them as your baby grows: brown rice, millet, oatmeal/rolled oats, pearled barley, yogurt, tofu, eggs, juices, tahini, Oatios®, pumpkin seeds, almonds, other nuts/seeds, nutritional yeast, wheat germ, lentils, split peas, beans, natural peanut and other nut butters (or nuts to make homemade nut butters), bulgur, non-degerminated cornmeal, whole wheat pasta, sunflower seeds for sprouting, and by now you're a pro and I don't have to tell you what to buy. Buy only the first two (brown rice and millet) your first time at the store, if you wish. Get the rest, as you need them.

Buying Natural Foods On-Line

If you can't get to a natural foods store, and your supermarket doesn't have the foods you are looking for, the Internet is another option. Some sites may be more expensive, but there is a price you pay for convenience. You can buy everything from natural peanut butter and tahini to organic whole grains and tofu on-line. There are many good web sites that sell natural and organic foods, including Amazon.

Natural Foods Web Sites

The Bread Beckers

www.breadbeckers.com

True Foods Market

www.truefoodsmarket.com

Organic Kingdom

www.organickingdom.com

Organic Direct

www.organicdirect.com

Papa's Organic

www.papasorganic.com

shopOrganic and shopGMOfree

www.shoporganic.com

These sites also carry organic non-GMO herbs, grains, seeds, etc.

Mountain Rose Herbs

www.mountainroseherbs.com

Starwest Botanicals

www.starwest-botanicals.com

Familiarize Yourself with These Items and Their Locations in Your Local Natural Foods Store

- Organic dry whole grains: brown rice, millet, whole oats, oat flakes and oatmeal, quinoa, teff, triticale, barley, etc.
- Whole grain flours and brans: whole wheat flour, soy flour, oat flour, rice flour, millet flour, oat flakes, etc.
- Organic legumes: dried beans, peas, lentils, soy grits, etc.
- Organic nuts and seeds, refrigerated: almonds, walnuts, flaxseed, etc.
- Jarred and canned nut and seed butters, such as organic peanut butter, almond butter, tahini, etc.
- Organic cow's milk, pasteurized and refrigerated
- Yogurt made from organic cow/soy/other milk, refrigerated
- Eggs from free-range, no-hormones-added chickens, refrigerated
- Tofu in sterile packages, refrigerated
- Tofu in aseptic packages that need no refrigeration, which can be kept safely at room temperature for up to 10 months. Once opened, they must be refrigerated.
- Commercial boxed breakfast cereals similar to those in the supermarket, such as Oatios or some other Cheerios[®]-like cereal, whole grain corn flakes cereal, etc.
- Nutritional enhancements, such as nutritional yeast, wheat germ, nonfat organic dry milk powder, desiccated liver, powdered kelp
- Whole grain pastas, such as lasagna, elbow macaroni, and spaghetti made from whole wheat, brown rice, or other whole grain
- Organic tomato, pasta, and other flavorful sauces, with no added salt, sugar, or hydrogenated oils
- Boxes of non-cow's milk: soy milk, rice milk, Better than Milk[®], goat's milk, oat milk, and almond and other nut milks. These boxes can be kept at room temperature until the expiration date, but they must be kept refrigerated once they are opened.
- Snack-type foods, with no added sugar: whole grain cookies, snack bars, fruit leathers, shredded coconut, and carob chips
- Caffeine-free flavorings and flavored drinks, such as carob powder (a chocolate substitute), grain coffee substitutes, and natural teas
- Books, including those on vegetarianism, nutrition, herbs, natural foods, and cookbooks (including *Super Baby Food*)
- Organically-grown fruits and vegetables
- Organic baby foods, such as organic jarred fruits and vegetables, organic whole grain boxed baby cereals, and organic whole grain teething crackers.
- Environment-friendly laundry detergents and other household cleaning products

Each Meal Takes Only A Few Minutes to Prepare

Batch Cooking Is the Key

Why does it only take a few minutes to prepare an entire home-cooked *Super Baby Food* meal? You have previously cooked batches of baby food and stored them in baby-sized portions in your refrigerator or freezer. They are there, ready and waiting for you to grab them and thaw them on the stove-top, making you capable of whipping up a complete baby meal consisting of vegetables, a fruit, and a cereal or protein food in a few minutes. “Aha,” you’re thinking, “There’s the catch! I have to spend days cooking over a hot stove to prepare these foods in advance!” Not true at all.

Foods You Must Prepare in Advance

There are really only three categories of foods that must be advance prepared in large batches to save time: *Super Porridge*, frozen cooked vegetables, and hard-cooked eggs. That’s it. Detailed step-by-step instructions for preparing and storing all of the *Super Baby Foods* are given in Part III of this book, but the box below contains a little information to give you an idea of how you would cook and store them. You just cannot buy these foods. There’s no commercial baby food on the market that is as healthy as your homemade. You can prepare these foods in less than 30 minutes per week.

Super Baby Foods To Be Prepared in Advance

- *Super Porridge* is a cooked cereal made from 2 parts whole grain and 1 part beans or other legumes. It takes about 10 minutes to prepare 2-3 days’ worth and keeps in the refrigerator for up to 3 days or in the freezer for 2 months. Preparation instructions start on page 54.
- Hard-cooked eggs take about 15 minutes to cook, but almost all of that time is waiting for them to boil. Once cooked, eggs keep in the refrigerator for only one week.
- Frozen food cubes of cooked vegetables and fruits take the most time—about 20 minutes to an hour or more, depending on the amount you’re preparing. But you only have to prepare them once every month or two. They keep stored in the freezer in plastic freezer bags for two or more months.

Foods Needing No Preparation in Advance

Other foods in the *Super Baby Food Diet* are fresh and require no cooking or advance preparation, and can be prepared in a minute or two immediately before serving. Some of these foods should not be prepared in advance, because of nutrient loss. For example, fruits are a main source of vitamin C, the most delicate of all nutrients. Preparing them a minute before your baby eats them helps maintain this unstable nutrient, which gets destroyed by air, heat, light, and water. Every minute after you cut open an orange or kiwi fruit means the loss of vitamin C. Other foods, like flax seeds, should not be prepared in advance because they get rancid in just a few hours.

Super Baby Foods That Need No Advance Preparation

- Yogurt, cheese, and other dairy foods: no preparation necessary, although you can make your own yogurt and save a bundle.
- Fresh fruit: takes a minute or two to wash, peel, core, and mash.
- Wheat germ, nutritional yeast powder, flaxseed oil, and other foods used as nutritional enhancers, which get sprinkled into other foods like *Super Porridge* and yogurt: no preparation necessary—just open the jar.
- Raw nuts and seeds: to prevent rancidity, kept them whole in the refrigerator, and then grind to a powder in the blender immediately before eating.
- Tofu: purée or mash and combine with other food, or use small chunks as finger food.
- 100% whole grain bread: no preparation necessary, except for possibly tearing into bite-sized pieces. Toasting destroys nutrients.

Foods that You Can Batch Prepare in Advance, If You Wish

There are other foods you can make yourself in order to save money. But if you don't want to take the time, you can purchase them from the supermarket or natural foods store instead. They will be as healthy as homemade. Foods like yogurt, fruit leather, teething and snack crackers, and whole grain bread cost about one third of store-bought if you make your own. The yogurt and fruit leather are cake to make at home and I would definitely recommend it, but the crackers and bread take time. Someday if you're feeling especially domestic and Martha Stewart-like, you should try them.

Develop Your Own Super Baby Food System

As you become more practiced at making *Super Baby Food*, you will develop your own system. One of my kitchen sessions, which I do every few weeks, is shown on page 53. These kitchen sessions are meant to give you a quick overview of the time necessary to prepare the *Super Baby Foods* and an idea of the steps involved. The details on how to prepare all of the *Super Baby Foods* are in Part III.

Additives in Commercial Baby Food

If you are going to buy commercial baby food, read the labels carefully for added sugar and salt. Some commercial baby food manufacturers still add sugar and salt to their jars of baby food, especially to the “dessert” types of baby food. Also, if you buy baby food, go for the single ingredient jars, which are less likely than the “dinners” to have added salt and the bad type of fat.

Hold the Salt and Sugar

When you are preparing homemade baby food, never add salt or sugar. Sugar causes cavities in the teeth and adds empty calories to your baby’s diet. Not only does sugar contain no nutrients, it actually uses up your baby’s existing nutrients from other foods for its digestion. If your baby fills up on sugar, there won’t be room for the *Super Baby Foods* with their important nutrients.

Although salt or sodium is needed by your baby’s body, he gets plenty of it from natural unsalted foods. Salt is an acquired taste, and you should not promote a love of salt in your baby’s taste buds. Too much salt is a problem in the typical American diet.

Veggies Take the Most Time, But Are Cooked Infrequently

The veggies are the baby foods that have to be cooked least often because they keep for at least two months in the freezer. Obviously, the larger the batch of veggies, the less often you have to make veggie food cubes. Rarely, when I have a lot of energy, I go all out and do the multi-batch vegetable cooking session. Or, when one particular vegetable goes on sale at the supermarket, I take advantage and stock up on food cubes by cooking using an assembly line-type kitchen session.

Hard-cook Eggs Once a Week

Because hard-cooked eggs keep for only one week in the refrigerator, I do them once a week on the same day of the week—Monday. That way I know when they've expired and should be thrown out.

Cook Super Porridge Once Every Few Days

Super Porridge keeps for only 2-3 days in the refrigerator so, unless you freeze it, it must be cooked two or three times a week. You may have to make it more often if you are blessed with twins, as I was! Although *Super Porridge* takes about 15 minutes to make, you can combine it with other household tasks so that it actually takes only a few minutes of your time.

Simultaneous Preparation of the Three Types of Super Baby Foods to Prepare in Advance: Frozen Veggie Cubes, Super Porridge, Hard-Cooked Eggs			
Time for each step	Steps for vegetables	Steps for Super Porridge	Steps for hard-cooked eggs
10 minutes	Wash, chop veggies, and start cooking on the stove top.		
30 seconds		Place water for <i>Super Porridge</i> on stove to boil.	
30 seconds			Place eggs in water on stove to boil.
3 minutes		Measure, mix, grind in blender grains/beans and put by stove, ready to stir into water. Put whisk by stove.	
5-10 minutes wait while veggies cook	Get purée equipment ready.	When water boils, stir in ground grains and beans. Note time when porridge will be done. Stir <i>Super Porridge</i> frequently.	Eggs started boiling, set timer, get towel for drying eggs ready. Forget about eggs until timer sounds.
7 minutes	Veggies are done cooking and standing, purée and put in ice cube trays, cover well, freeze.	Keep stirring <i>Super Porridge</i> frequently.	
2 minutes		<i>Super Porridge</i> done. Pour into individual bowls, cover, and refrigerate.	
2 minutes			Eggs done. Run cold water into pot. Dry well, cover, refrigerate.
Total time: 23-28 minutes.			

Integrating Super Porridge into Your Daily Kitchen Routine

Super Porridge keeps in the refrigerator for 2-3 days, therefore every few days you must make a fresh batch (unless you freeze it). There's no need for it to take more than a few minutes out of your day, if you merge it into the

household tasks that you're doing anyway. Plan on making *Super Porridge* when you are going to be hanging around in the kitchen for at least 10 minutes, because you should stir *Super Porridge* every couple of minutes to prevent scorching. I make *Super Porridge* while I simultaneously do my daily 15-minute “quick pick-up” routine. Here's how I fit it in.

Time Super Porridge Right and It Won't Take Any Time

1. Place water on the stove to boil. Remember to always use the back burners and to turn the handles toward the wall so that baby can't reach.
2. Measure and grind grains and beans in blender and place next to stove. Place whisk next to stove. Now everything is ready for when the water begins to boil.
3. While waiting the 5 or so minutes for the water to boil, I do a small “out of kitchen” task, such as: sort or start a load of laundry, pick up some of the toys that are scattered throughout the house, fix a bed, take out the garbage, make a quick phone call, etc. But don't get sidetracked and forget about the pot on the stove as I have done many times!
4. Return to kitchen and sprinkle the ground grain/bean powder into boiling water. If you use the same burner, the same pot, and the same amount of water, you will know exactly how long it will take for the water to boil and you can set a loud timer to signal you to return to the kitchen with perfect timing.
5. Reduce heat and keep stirring until it cools a bit.
6. Now's the time to do 10 minutes of kitchen tasks while stirring the *Super Porridge* every 2 minutes: hand wash the last meal's dishes or empty/load the dishwasher, make a batch of formula bottles, take an inventory of the food staples on page 143 so that you know what to buy on today's trip to the natural foods store, clip coupons, sweep the kitchen floor, wipe off the counter tops, do a quick clean of the refrigerator—throw old food out and wipe off a shelf, call Aunt Erin, put her on speaker and wipe down the top of the refrigerator, check your emails, etc.
7. Pour finished *Super Porridge* into individual bowls, cover well, and refrigerate.
8. Clean the pot.

Voilà! Super Porridge for 2-3 days.