TASTE AND TEXTURE IN INFANT WEANING: HOW WEANING PRACTICE IMPACTS ON LATER EATING HABITS

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FOOD: A LOT TO LEARN

WHAT YOU DO AND EAT IN THE FIRST 1000 DAYS MAKES A DIFFERENCE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE
FOOD: A LOT TO LEARN

- SENSES
- CULTURAL Identity
- NUTRITION
- SELF-IDENTITY
- FOOD LITERACY
- SOCIAL INTERACTION
WITH AN IMPACT ON LATER LIFE

Early food variety during weaning impacts vegetable intake at 6 yrs

Nicklaus et al. 2005

Maier-Noth et al. 2016

Food variety preferences at 2-3 yrs are similar to 17-22 yrs
Schwartz et al. 2011

- Weaning
  - When
    - Initiation & Progress in feeding
      - Timing
  - What
    - Balanced nutrition
      - Nutrients
      - Taste
      - Texture
    - Sensory exposure
  - How
    - Procedure
      - Repeated exposure
      - Variety
    - Child
      - Self feeding
      - Self regulation
    - Parent-child interaction
      - Parenting style & Parenting practices
DEVELOPING EATING SKILLS

Evolve quickly over the first year of life

May impact the posture and strength of speech organs

Some movement patterns are texture dependent

The ability of infants to cope with difficult textures is dependent on the textures they were offered previously

Infants should be offered textured foods when they are developmentally ready – around 6-7 months of age
EFFECTIVE CHEWING TAKES PRACTICE!

Wilson & Green 2009
### Timing of Food Introduction vs. Food Refusals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing of Food Pieces Introduction</th>
<th>Food Refusals at 15 mo</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 6 mo</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9 mo</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;9 mo</td>
<td>52%</td>
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</tbody>
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- **Refusing solids / milk**
- **Eating less fruit & veg**
- **Fussy eating**
- **Not eating enough**
PREFERENCE FOR SWEET

Schwartz, Issanchou, & Nicklaus, 2009
Preference for salty taste appears around 4 months – food led? Or ability?

Learnt association hypothesis

Throughout complementary feeding exposure to sour, salty, umami and bitter tastes rise – never as high as exposure to sweet
It is important that textures that require chewing are introduced before 9–10 months, and ideally at 6-7 months.

Further studies on timing and texture types needed to inform practical guidance to parents and safe adaptation of commercial foods where appropriate.

Preference for sweet or salty tastes is likely driven by exposure throughout the complementary feeding period – added salt and sugar should be limited or avoided.
THANK YOU

WHAT YOU DO AND EAT IN THE FIRST 1000 DAYS, MAKES A DIFFERENCE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

- Pregnancy
- Breastfeeding
- Weaning
- Toddler
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