

## BABIES WHO WON'T EAT MEAT.

The best way to ensure your baby gets a healthy diet with a variety of different foods, including meat is to start with a healthy eating plan from the very beginning of feeding your baby solids.

Babies and small children don't have a very acute sense of taste, a quality that allows them to enjoy various horrors such as eating snails, dirt, and the cat's food if allowed to get too close to it. What they have is a very delicate sense of texture.

This is why they need to get used to the texture of real food right from the beginning. If you feed your baby commercial baby food you will find, if you taste it, it has a very smooth, almost gluey texture. If your child is used to this total lack of texture it is hard for them to move on to eating foods with grainy or fibrous textures.

This is why it is so important to cook the food your baby eats right from the beginning. When you puree vegetables for your baby, while the puree is smooth, there remains a tiny bit of texture in it. Think of mashed potatoes, they can be very smooth but if you rub a little between your fingers you would detect a slight graininess. This lack of the gluey smoothness of commercial baby food helps to prepare your baby for eating food that has increasing amounts of texture to it.

When a baby has moved to eating three meals a day, around six, seven or eight months, it depends on the age you started on solids, you can introduce small amounts of meat in to the puree.

A couple of thin slices of raw chicken or lamb or beef cooked along with the vegetables and then put in to the blender will puree down to be almost unnoticeable along with the vegetables. This gets your baby used to the taste and texture of the pureed meat and vegetables and provided variety in your baby's diet.

All slightly older babies, around seven months, enjoy sucking on a lamb cutlet bone which has most of the meat removed so there are no large pieces they can accidentally swallow and choke on. They get some flavor and a small amount of meat, and it helps with the teething desire to chew.

If the problem is your baby has been used to very smooth textures then the refusal to eat meat is usually that they find the texture unpleasant. You can try to overcome this by introducing some finely minced meat or chicken and further smoothing out the texture by blending it with a small amount of stock or water and mixing this in to the food they like to eat. Always start with a very small amount and gradually increase it as the baby becomes used to the taste and texture.