

# Aeroflow Breastpumps

## Baby Led Weaning

### What is Baby-Led Weaning?

Baby-led weaning (BLW) is another way to offer your baby complementary foods starting at the age of 6 months. Instead of being spoon-fed with pureed foods and gradually increasing the consistency, BLW encourages self feeding after 6 months.<sup>1</sup> Foods fed by the family are given to the infant as finger foods. This allows the child to feed themselves, promotes independence, and allows food exploration. Note BLW does not mean you start decreasing the amount of breast milk you offer your baby; it is a different way to introduce complementary foods. Research has shown families who tried BLW practices exclusively breastfed for longer period.<sup>2</sup>

### When to Start BLW?

How do you know if your baby is ready?<sup>3</sup> Look for these signs:

- Can control head and neck
- Can sit up with support
- Brings objects to mouth
- Tries to grab small objects like toys or food
- Swallows food instead of pushing it out

### Benefits of BLW

Here are a few benefits of BLW:<sup>4,5</sup>

- Eat when hungry and stop when full (may help with preventing excess weight gain)
- High consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Improve development of motor skills
- Part of family meals and eating the same food

### Concerns of BLW

Here are a few concerns with BLW:

- Concerns with choking<sup>6</sup>
  - Cut food into long, thin sticks about the width and length of your pinky finger. Avoid circles. When babies can pick up food on their own (8-10 months), cut food into pea-sized pieces.

- Leaving baby alone while eating
  - Important to be with your baby when they are eating
- Messier then spoon-feeding
  - Use a floor mat, bib or towel
- Concerns about not meeting nutritional needs<sup>Z</sup>
  - Give a variety of foods like protein, vegetables, fruits, calcium-rich foods, and whole grains. Focus on foods with iron, protein, and healthy fats.. Soft fruits, vegetables and meats are great first foods.
- Concerns about eating too much sugar, fat and salt<sup>Z</sup>
  - Do not feed foods with added sugar, fat and salt
- Delay complementary foods
  - Offer at around 6 months when baby shows signs they are ready

### What If I Have Questions?

If you are interested in learning more, this Aeroflow class expands on some of the topics discussed above:

- Solid Foods for the Breastfed Infant

To register for this class, log into your portal or click [here](#).

### References

1. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/wedupdate/moyr/2017/to pic/0809babyled.pdf>
2. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21143584/>
3. <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/>
4. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5438437>
5. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6958549/>
6. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29205569/>
7. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24327363/>