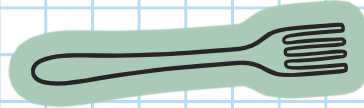




Weaning on a Budget



In the current climate, it's completely understandable that some parents might be feeling overwhelmed when it comes to finances. When your baby is ready to begin their weaning journey, we know some parents feel pressured to buy the highest quality produce and expensive, branded pre-prepared products. We want to reassure you that providing your baby with balanced, nutritious meals doesn't have to cost a fortune and weaning your baby can be designed to accommodate any budget.

How can I minimise the cost of weaning?

Although it might feel that moving your baby on from milk is going to be expensive, there are so many options for providing your baby with a variety of nutrients, flavours and textures at a really reasonable price.

Opt for homemade where possible.

Although pre-prepared food can be useful if you're in a rush or need something last minute, homemade meals are much cheaper and more nutritious for your baby. Stick to simple ingredients, refrain from adding sugar or salt and batch cook where possible to stock your freezer with some quick and easy meals. Batch cooking involves cooking much larger portions of food to utilise at a later date - you'll thank yourself later.

Plan ahead.

Planning ahead can help you to save money and reduce waste - you'll be less likely to reach for the expensive pre-prepared baby food in the supermarket and more likely to make the most from the contents of your fridge before they go out of date! Use our **Baby-Led Weaning Planner** to help you keep track of what your baby is going to eat and when. This will help you to only buy what you need and prevent you from needing to throw away wasted products.

Consider baby-led weaning.

Baby-led weaning involves your baby eating family meals, meaning you don't have to cook for them separately. This can reduce energy bills as well as food shopping bills. If you think this might suit your family or if you'd like to learn more, take a look at this **guide** which highlights the differences between baby-led and traditional weaning.

Shop smartly.

You might notice that supermarkets often brand products using the word 'baby' to hike the prices up. In reality, there is no reason why your baby can't have normal pasta or rice cakes instead of the 'baby' versions which are much more expensive.

It's also worth checking the freezer section - you'll find that frozen fruits are much cheaper and still retain their flavours and nutrients. Try popping some frozen strawberries or raspberries into plain yoghurt for a really cheap, sweet treat, too!

Consider checking your local supermarkets for their 'wonky' vegetables section or subscriptions. An increasing number of supermarkets are selling fruits or vegetables which don't look quite right or are quickly approaching their expiry date for a reduced price. Don't worry - they are perfectly safe to eat and retain their nutritional value.

When you're shopping, keep an eye out for the supermarket's own branded products, sales and reduced stickers or labels, which tend to be applied towards the end of the day. If you're able, it's always worth stocking your freezer or pantry with reduced items if you know you'll use them.

Get creative!

If you do find yourself with some fruit or vegetables which are quickly approaching their use-by date, don't head straight for the bin. Instead, why not bake some **muffins**, **pancakes** or a **frittata**?

Consider baby-led weaning.

Your shopping list is personal to your family's preferences and circumstances but we've put together a list of things you might consider, including:

- canned beans
- frozen peas
- frozen corn
- frozen carrots
- rice
- rolled oats
- onions
- potatoes
- tomatoes
- broccoli
- cauliflower
- tofu

These versatile ingredients can help you provide a wholesome, balanced diet for your baby and can be used in a variety of ways. For meal inspiration, take a look at our Weaning category and remember that all of our recipes can be adapted to suit your family.

This resource may involve the use of knives, hot water, edible ingredients and kitchen appliances. It is your responsibility to assess risks and ensure the activity is safe for those participating. We will not be held responsible for the health and safety of those participating and cannot accept any liability. It is your responsibility to ensure you are fully aware of the allergies and health conditions of anyone making or consuming these products. Children should be carefully supervised by a responsible adult at all times, especially when using any sharp items such as knives or graters or when near a heat source. Additionally, it is important to remember that certain foods may present a choking risk. It is the responsibility of supervising adults to ensure the safety of children in their care.