

# Making Food Safe for Babies and Children

It's important to consider the size, shape and texture of the foods that we offer babies and young children, to reduce their risk of choking. It takes time to master the ability to chew and swallow food, and young children might not be able to cough forcefully enough to dislodge an airway obstruction. Therefore, we should take time to prepare foods so that they're safe for children under 5 to eat.

## Tips to Reduce the Risk of Choking

Ensure children sit down to eat and that you encourage them to chew their food and finish what's in their mouth, before offering more

- Avoid offering chunks of food, such as pieces of sausage, chunks of fruit and vegetables and cubes of cheese

- Instead of chunks, cut foods into narrow batons to make them safer and more manageable

- Firm fruits and vegetables can be softened by steaming, mashing or grating

- Cut round foods, such as cherry tomatoes and grapes, lengthways and then into quarters

- Peel the skin off from fruits and vegetables to make them easier to chew and swallow

- Always remove hard pips and stones from fruit

- Cut whole dried fruits, such as raisins, into small pieces

- Cut bread into narrow strips. White bread can be dough-like if not chewed properly. Try toasting or use brown bread instead

- Avoid offering whole nuts. Instead finely chop or flake nuts, peanuts and seeds

- Do not give peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread or in cooking

- Avoid offering foods, such as marshmallows, raw jelly cubes, popcorn, chewing gum, boiled sweets and ice cubes

- Remove bones from meat and fish

- Remove the skin and fat from meat and fish to make them easier to swallow

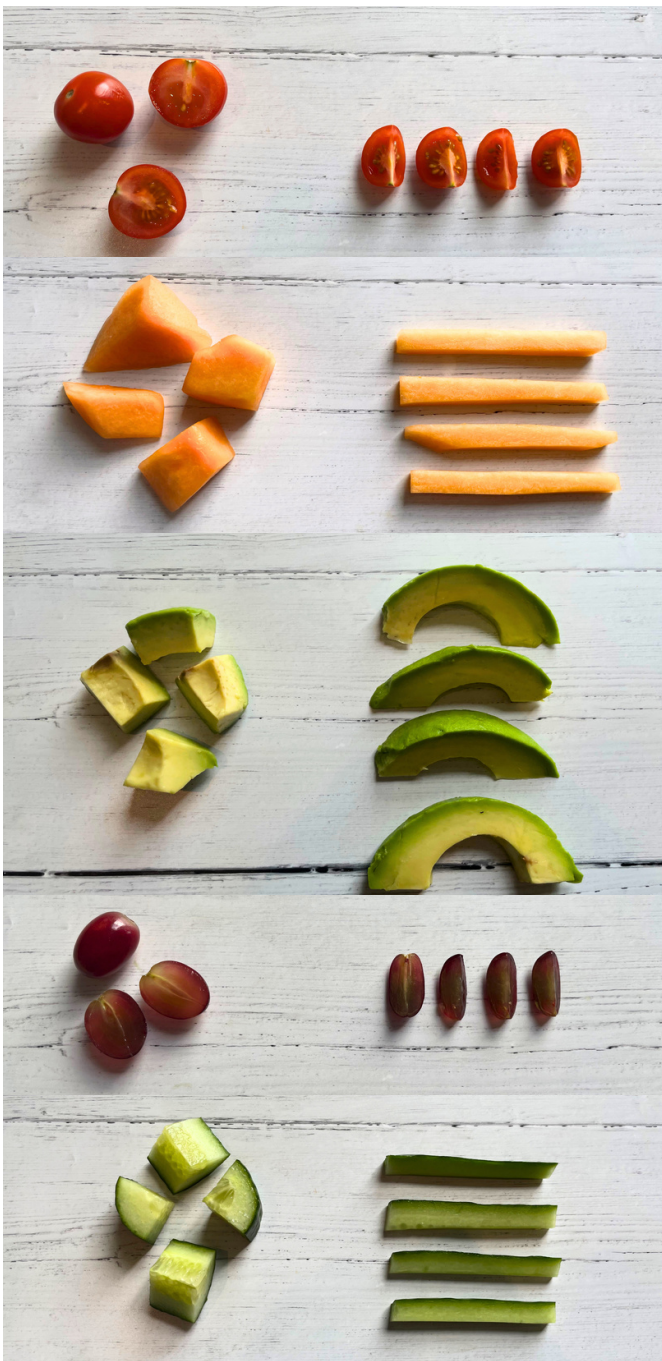
# Suitable Finger Foods

Finger foods should be easy for babies to grip, so a good guide is to make them about the size of an adult index finger, in a stick or chip like shape. To begin with, finger foods should be soft, so it's a good idea to check they're "squishable" between your thumb and forefinger

Take a look at the images below for examples of suitable and unsuitable ways to serve finger foods



## Unsuitable Suitable



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