

V&ME

Your Pre-Weaning Starter Guide



Welcome to V&Me!

I started the company almost 2 years ago after I went through a less than perfect weaning process with my first son V. Now I have a chance to do it all over again with my second baby W, I want to make sure we have the “perfect” weaning journey from the get go.

That’s why I have teamed up with our paediatric dietitians Jo & Ruth and our kitchen team led by Chef Kwesi, to bring you the Ultimate Weaning Kit by V&Me.

I am so excited to have you join me on this journey and do drop me a message if you have any questions or comments!

With love

Founder, Mulu



Meet Kwesi, Head chef

A key figure behind many iconic restaurants in London (Sea Containers, the Gherkins)

“I am dedicated to making a change to our future. This means supporting our children growing up and making better decisions regarding what they eat. I am passionate about creating recipes that the whole family will love.

It's a great feeling to know our next generation is eating the best available healthy meals.”



Meet Jo and Ruth, Our Paediatric Dietitians

Two of UK's leading paediatric dietitian experts in baby and toddler nutrition.

“We love Mulu's passion to provide children with the best nutrition possible. Food for the early years isn't regulated in the same way that school food is; there are guidelines but these are only voluntary.



Mulu was keen to ensure she was doing everything possible to make sure her meals were meeting recommendations and has taken on board all of our advice, doesn't cut corners or compromise with quality.”

What do we mean by weaning?

From around 6 months, babies are ready to be introduced to solid foods along with their breast or formula milk.

It helps your baby get the nutrients they need to grow and develop. It also allows them to explore new textures and tastes and learn how to eat independently.

These early days are super important, as research has found that nutrition and eating habits built in their first 1,000 days of life could have life-long impact on their health and well being.

That's what V&Me is set up for – to provide every child with the best nutritional start to their lives.

Is your baby ready?

Babies need to be developmentally ready before they start the weaning process.

Here are some of the signs of readiness.

(If you have subscribed to us but realise that your baby may not yet be ready, you can choose to postpone your first delivery by emailing help@vandme.co.uk at least 48 hours before your scheduled delivery)

There are three key signs to watch out for when they are around 6 months:

- They can stay in a sitting position, holding their head steady
- They can coordinate their eyes, hands and mouth so they can look at their food, pick it up and put it in their mouth
- They can swallow food (rather than spit it back out)

What will you need?

Here are a few basic pieces of equipment to get you started with weaning:

- **A high-chair** will help your baby sit upright (so they can swallow properly). Bring them to the dining table if possible as shared meal time encourages healthy eating habits. Ideally it should have a footrest (this is important to ensure a good feeding position and that baby is comfortable)
- **Bibs** are helpful in catching food but please don't be too stressed about them getting messy – it's good for them to “play” with their food! You may also want to get some newspaper or a mat for under their high chair as a lot of it may end up there!
- **Soft weaning spoons** can be gentler on their gums
- **First cup** – Introduce a cup from around 6 months and offer sips of water with meals

TIP:



Always sit with your baby when they are eating, and avoid feeding them when they aren't sat in their highchair

Why is V&Me suggesting a combined approach?

You may have heard about the debate between pureed food vs. Baby led weaning. Here at V&Me, we offer a combination of both: you will receive, for every day, a portion of pureed food and some finger foods.

We believe that's the best approach as it helps babies practise hand-eye coordination and motor skills with finger foods; but at the same time we can make sure they take in the necessary nutrients from things which are harder to chew (such as meat).

How much should your baby eat?

It is important to remember that every child is different and may have different feeding needs. It is important to pay attention to your baby's hunger and fullness cues and offer them appropriate amounts of food (see more about responsive feeding in the next section).

To start with, they will probably only take a teaspoon's worth of food and only need one offering of food a day but with time and practice they will start to increase the amount eaten and look forward to their new routine. Once you have introduced one meal a day and are established with this you can start to offer a second meal in the day if baby is interested.

By 7 months, you can start to move them to 3 meals a day (if your baby is ready) and continue with their usual milk. Top up our meals with a healthy breakfast – fortified Ready oats with breast/formula/Cow's milk and fresh fruits is a great idea.

Please note that our portions are generous, as we know a lot of the food may end up on the floor – so please don't feel like your baby needs to eat everything we've given! You can also use our product for both lunch and dinner when your baby is ready for 2 meals a day.

Responsive Feeding

Responsive feeding means paying attention to your baby's hunger and fullness cues and offering them appropriate amounts of food. It is important to respect your baby's appetite and allow them to eat as much or as little as they want. This helps your baby learn to regulate their own food intake and can help prevent overfeeding or underfeeding.

Some tell-tell signs that your baby is full:

- Pushes their food away
- Closes their mouth when food is offered
- Turns their head away from food
- Uses hand motions or makes sounds to let you know they're full

Gagging ...

is a normal reflex that helps babies move food to the back of their throat and is usually not a cause for concern. It may occur when a baby is learning to eat solid foods and is not used to the texture or consistency of the food.

Gagging may also occur if a baby tries to eat too much food at once or if they are eating too quickly. If it does happen, it's important to stay calm and try not to panic.

Choking...

on the other hand, is a serious issue that can occur when a foreign object becomes stuck in the airway and blocks the flow of air. Choking can be life-threatening and requires immediate attention.

Whilst the best course of action for gagging is doing nothing, if you suspect choking, there are first aid moves you can use to help them. We strongly recommend taking a first aid course for your peace of mind.

The 5-week menu – what to expect?

Week 1 – Introduction of bitter vegetables with a single finger food

Week 2 – Introduction of egg, plant-based protein (beans) & starches

Week 3 - Introduction of red meat (iron) and home introduction of peanut

Week 4 – Introduction of fish (oily & white)

Week 5 – Introduction of wheat (gluten)

All weeks contain a vitamin C rich source to aid absorption of iron and moving from smooth to lumpier textures with finger foods helps to develop oro-motor skills.

