Wean simply with *gel*

A guide to introducing the second stage protein substitute
Your baby is growing up!

Up until now your child has been receiving their protein substitute as a specialist infant formula from a bottle. It's now time to start introducing a second stage protein substitute.

Why?

When your child is around 6 months of age their dietitian will help you start the weaning process of introducing solid foods into your child’s diet. At this time you will also be introducing a second stage protein substitute. gel has been specifically developed to make this weaning process as simple and stress free as possible helping you and your child get off to a good start.
What is **gel**?

A concentrated, powdered protein substitute which when mixed with water is easily made to a smooth, semi-solid consistency.

**How does gel fit into your child’s diet?**

Protein is essential for the growth and development of your child. From 6 to 12 months of age, gel will be used alongside the specialist infant formula and breast milk / standard infant formula in order to meet their protein requirements.

At 12 months of age, gel will become their sole source of protein substitute. The solid foods you are introducing at this time will provide the small amount of natural protein they require.

**Why does gel make a great second stage protein substitute?**

At this stage your child is getting used to lots of textures and tastes.

**gel is:**

- **similar in texture** to many other foods they are taking at this time.
- **low volume...** to encourage a healthy appetite for food.
- **taken off the spoon** – so you’re in control!
- **available in sachets** no weighing or measuring required – simple for busy parents, grandparents or nursery to use!
- **mirrors the weaning process** peace of mind for you that the right amount is given at the right time, helping to reduce reliance on a bottle.

**gel is available in unflavoured and some ready flavoured** versions helping to keep those inquisitive taste buds happy. FlavourPac® sachets are also available to use with unflavoured gel. Ask your dietitian for more information.

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* *age restrictions apply. Flavoured gels are for (Phenylketonuria) PKU only.*

Introducing a new protein substitute to a young child may take a little bit of time.

Initially they may:

- Be stubborn.
- Refuse it.
- Be teething.

Changing anything in a child’s routine can be disruptive not just for them, but for you too.

So don’t give up if it takes a while. The end result will be worth it.

**Remember:**
Taste isn’t always an issue at this age.

Your child will have different taste buds to you. If you try the gel yourself be sure to show plenty of encouragement, even if it’s not quite to your liking, as your reaction can influence their acceptance of gel.

Preparation Guidelines

1. Empty the contents of the sachet, plus ½ FlavourPac sachet if desired, into the beaker.
2. Add 30ml of cold water. Secure the lid and shake well for 10 seconds.
3. Leave to stand for 2 minutes, allowing a smooth gel to form. Consume with a spoon.

If your child is also taking either keyΩmega or docΩmega, just 1 sachet should be taken per day with any one serving of gel.

Once made up the gel should be used as soon as possible. Always make up fresh each time.

- IMPORTANT - water or permitted drinks should be taken after the gel.
- gel unflavoured option is suitable from 6 months to 10 years of age.
- PKU gel orange and raspberry are suitable from 1 to 10 years of age.
- FlavourPac is suitable from 3 years of age.
A dietitian will advise you when and how to introduce gel to your baby.

- **Start small.** It’s usual to start introducing gel a few spoonfuls once per day. This will then increase over a number of weeks.

- **As you increase the amount of gel over time,** you will decrease the amount of specialist infant formula until eventually all the protein substitute will be given as gel.

This table can help you keep track of the amounts you need to give over the coming weeks.

**Your child will need to take:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: ____________</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>____________ sachets of gel x ____________ times per day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ ____________ ml of <em>(specialist infant formula)</em> x ____________ times per day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ ____________ ml of <em>(standard infant formula)</em> x ____________ times per day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>or ____________ breast feeds per day.</td>
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Top tips for giving gel to babies (6 to 12 months old)

Giving gel for the first time
Feeding new foods to a young baby can be very entertaining. Be prepared for funny faces! Sometimes they may spit the gel out – this is normal. Just scoop it up with the spoon and try again.

Be organised
Make sure your baby is seated and secure in an appropriate high chair. Have everything you need at hand e.g. gel pre-prepared in a beaker, baby bib and baby spoon, sipper cup containing water.

Routine
Give gel at the same time and same way each day, ideally at the start of each meal – when your baby is hungriest.

Take control
It’s important to make sure they take all the gel. At this stage don’t allow your child to feed themselves. If they insist give them an extra spoon to hold so they can join in too.

Give lots of praise
Encourage your child. Bribes or toys to distract children rarely work.

Don’t rush
Go at your baby’s pace... but remember it’s important they finish the gel before you start to give food.

Must finish
Scrape the beaker and get your baby to lick the spoon. It’s important to take the full amount to aid growth and development.

Teething
Making up gel with ice cold water may help make things easier at this time.

Offer Water
In a sipper cup after they have finished taking the gel not in between mouthfuls as this would only fill them up.

And remember...
Stick at it – some days it may feel like it is taking forever to feed your baby but don’t give up. Keep going as long as it takes. It will soon get easier.

Right foundations – Setting good habits now can help your child reach their full potential.
Top tips for giving gel to toddlers and young children (1 to 3 years old)

**Give before mealtimes**
It’s important they take all the gel so you don’t want them filling up with food first.

**Be consistent**
Children thrive on routine and knowing what’s going to happen next.

**Encourage them to become independent**
Start to give them some control taking their gel e.g. getting the gel out of the cupboard. They might like to choose their own special spoon or chair to sit in but remember there’s no choice when it comes to actually taking the gel.

**If your child refuses gel**
React in a calm, but firm manner. Children will soon learn this is the way it has to be. Explain the importance of their “special” gel and why they need to take it.

**Praise**
Reward charts and stickers can help at this stage.

**Remove distractions**
If required, turn off the TV and remove toys. Give your child your full attention.

**Offer water**
In a sipper cup after the gel. Drinking water is a great habit to get your child used to.

**A few spoonfuls and it’s all gone**
It will get quicker and easier with time.

And remember...

**Stick at it** — some days it may feel like it is taking forever to feed your child but don’t give up. Keep going as long as it takes. It will soon get easier.

**Right foundations** — Setting good habits now can help your child reach their full potential.
What about giving gel when my child is not well?

It’s natural that children may be ill from time to time, but it’s important that they still take their gel as it is needed for their dietary management.

Top tip for giving gel during illness:

**Little and often**
If they cannot manage to take their usual quantity of gel then give it to them in smaller amounts more frequently throughout the day.

If you are unsure or concerned, speak to your dietitian.

Other things Vitaflor® can provide to help...

- **Starter packs**
  We know every child is different so our starter packs give them the chance to try all the flavours’ available so they can see what best suits them.

- **A reward chart** and height wall chart are also available.

- **Beakers** with secure lid... perfect for making gel up at home or out and about.

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Who are Vitaflo?
Vitaflo are experts at making products for people with special dietary needs. For over 20 years we have been working closely with leading metabolic hospitals and most importantly you the families, to develop the best possible products to suit all age groups and all lifestyles. We have a range of great products to support your child as they grow offering the right choice at the right time... it couldn’t be simpler!

Vitaflo products are available on our free home delivery service.*

☑ Stress free
Monthly deliveries direct to your door

☑ Hassle free
Freephone helpline for all your delivery enquiries

If you have any questions or would like to be registered on Vitaflo at Home please contact your dietitian.

*Available only in the UK