

Foods to Avoid When Your Child is Not in Your Care

When your child is not in your care, it may help you—and your caregiver—to have low choking risk foods on the menu. Note: An asterisk (*) indicates this food is not appropriate for babies in any form.

Apple (raw)	Baby carrots
Berries	Bread with nut butters
Candy*	Canned fruit
Carrots (raw)	Celery (raw)
Cheese, especially string cheese and cubes	Cherries
Chickpeas	Chips and snack foods
Cookies*	Corn kernels
Dried fruit	Fish with bones
Granola bars*	Grapes
Hot dogs*	Melon balls
Peanuts	Peas
Pear (if firm)	Pretzels*
Nuts and seeds	Nut butters
Orange segments (especially mandarins)	Pomegranate arils
Popcorn*	Marshmallow*
Meat sticks (i.e., processed beef jerky)*	Raisins
Rice, barley, and grains (whole kernel)	Sausage
Shrimp	Tapioca beads (like in bubble tea)*
Tomatoes (cherry and grape)	Vegetables (any raw)

Modifying High-Risk Foods for Babies

While there are foods on the above list that are not appropriate for babies in any form, you can modify many most foods to make them safer for babies.

- **Apple:** cook until very soft, grate, mash, or slice into paper-thin slices
- **Berries:** flatten between fingers or quarter (strawberries can be sliced)
- **Bread with nut butter:** avoid until baby is an advanced eater
- **Carrots:** grate or cook until very soft and slice lengthwise (never in coins)
- **Celery:** slice into half-moons and cook until soft
- **Cheese:** cut into ruler-thin slices (never in cubes)
- **Cherries:** pit and quarter
- **Chickpeas:** smash or purée
- **Corn:** avoid loose kernel corn and serve on the cob
- **Fish:** de-bone thoroughly
- **Grapes:** quarter lengthwise
- **Melon:** make sure it's ripe, cut into thin slices (never melon balls or cubes)
- **Peanuts:** finely grind or thin peanut butter with yogurt
- **Peas:** smash, mash, or purée until age one
- **Pear:** if it's firm, cook until soft or serve in thin slices
- **Nuts and seeds:** finely grind and mix into other foods
- **Nut butters:** thin with yogurt, applesauce, breast milk, or formula
- **Oranges:** supreme to remove membrane
- **Pomegranate arils:** crush or flatten
- **Rice, barley, and grains:** cook well and smash until age one
- **Sausage:** quarter lengthwise
- **Shrimp:** cut lengthwise into quarters
- **Tomatoes (cherry and grape):** quarter
- **Vegetables:** cook until soft, then slice or mash