

***Baby & Toddler
Meals***

FOR

DUMMIES®

**by Dawn Simmons and Curt Simmons,
with Sallie Warren, MS, RD, LD**



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Dedication

This book is for all new moms and dads and especially for Brad and Marty Bugg and their son, Seth.

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Introduction

As a parent, especially if you're reading this book, you want to do what's right for your kids. From training and teaching to fun and laughter, you want your home to be a safe haven and a place of health for your children. When it comes to creating the optimal environment for your youngsters, food is an inevitable part of the process. After all, you want your child to be healthy, and good health stems from good nutrition. With that in mind, we wrote *Baby & Toddler Meals For Dummies* just for you. After all, if you want to ensure the most wholesome nutrition for your "little you," so to speak, you need to know how and what is best to feed your young one.

Perhaps you've strolled the supermarket aisles, looking at all the baby food and toddler snacks, and you've wondered, "Is this stuff wholesome? Could I make it myself? Could I do it better?" Those are important questions to ask, and the answers are unequivocally, Yes! We tell you how in the pages that follow.

When you choose to make your child's meals on your own, you put yourself in the driver's seat of your child's nutrition. Not only will these homemade meals be nutritious for your child, but also you'll find that the work and care involved gives you a great sense of satisfaction in knowing that you're doing your best to bring your baby up healthy.

About This Book

We wrote this book so you can find the information you need quickly and easily. We don't ramble on about things that don't matter, and you don't have to read the entire book if you don't want to. In fact, you can read the book from cover to cover or simply jump around to the topics you want to find out more about at the moment. And best of all, we don't expect you to remember anything — we know you probably have a string on each finger to remind you of doctor appointments, daycare schedules, sports schedules, and on and on, so we organized this book in a logical, straightforward format so you can get the information you need quickly and easily.

Conventions Used in This Book

Before you use the recipes in this book, here are a few guidelines that'll help ensure your success:

- ✔ Before you start cooking, make sure that you read through the entire recipe. Doing so ensures that you have all the ingredients and cooking tools before you begin.
- ✔ Pepper means ground black pepper unless otherwise specified.
- ✔ If a recipe calls for mayonnaise, don't substitute salad dressing.
- ✔ All butter is unsalted.
- ✔ All eggs are large.
- ✔ All milk is whole.
- ✔ Flour is all-purpose unless otherwise specified.
- ✔ Sugar is granulated unless otherwise noted.
- ✔ All onions are yellow unless otherwise specified.
- ✔ All temperatures are Fahrenheit. (See the Metric Conversion Guide in Appendix A at the end of the book for information about converting temperatures to Celsius.)

In addition to the conventions we follow for the ingredients, we use a few other conventions to point out helpful info:

- ✔ We use *italics* to point out new terms that we define as well as terms or concepts that merit emphasis.
- ✔ We use **boldface** to highlight the keywords in a bulleted list or the action parts of numbered steps.
- ✔ We use `monofont` to point out Web addresses that you may want to check out for further information that we don't dive into here.
- 🍅 We use a tomato symbol like the one shown here to point out the vegetarian recipes. For the purposes of this book, we define *vegetarian* as including no meat — that means no seafood, no chicken broth, nada. (We don't include this symbol for drinks and desserts, though; those recipes are naturally okay for vegetarians.)

What You're Not to Read

Sidebars contain extra information, so you don't have to read 'em. However, they often explain some technique or issue in more detail, and you may find the information helpful.

We also won't threaten treachery if you don't read the text marked with a Technical Stuff icon — although we put our hearts and souls into providing

every ounce of information you may want or need pertaining to this book's topic, some of the info just isn't read-or-die. So skip over these paragraphs if you want, but know that you may be missing some gold nuggets of additional info if you do.

Foolish Assumptions

As we wrote this book, we made a few assumptions about you:

- ✔ We assume you know a thing or two about cooking, but we don't assume you're a professional chef. In the pages of this book, you'll find real-life tips, suggestions, and recipes you can use right away, but we don't dwell on the basics of cooking.
- ✔ We assume you can get your hands on common, everyday items and ingredients. If you want to cook a recipe in this book, you'll be able to find the ingredients at your local supermarket or health-food store; you won't need to buy ingredients from exotic places.
- ✔ We assume you want to cook for your child in a practical, down-to-earth way and want to do your best. We think that's great, and we've written this book for you from that perspective.
- ✔ We assume that you need help pulling everything together. You may know a thing or two about feeding babies and children and may need a few recipes. But you also may need help understanding portion sizes and nutritional balance, and you need practical recipes you can whip up in a flash. Don't worry; you've come to the right place.
- ✔ We assume you're deeply concerned about being a good parent. You care so much about your child's well-being that you're convinced that cooking your tyke's meals is the best step toward raising a healthy child.
- ✔ We assume you're intelligent. After all, you bought this book!

How This Book Is Organized

Baby & Toddler Meals For Dummies is divided into seven parts, which we describe in this section. Each part contains appropriate chapters that as a whole cover everything you need to know about cooking baby and toddler meals. With this design, you can find the information you need without having to dig around.

Part I: Lovin' Spoonfuls: Feeding Your Baby and Toddler

In this part, you find some basic information about cooking for babies and toddlers. If you want to cook for your child but you don't really know where to start or what tools you need, this is the perfect place to start. In Chapter 1, we provide an overview of the many topics this book covers as well as a brief quiz to assess your nutritional know-all. We also point you in directions tailored to your needs. In Chapter 2, you find out what it means to raise a well-fed child — we're talking the whole shebang, from serving balanced meals to setting appropriate mealtimes to recognizing the most important vitamins and minerals for your child's health. In Chapter 3, we cover kitchen basics, including kitchen appliances you need, feeding and storage equipment to have on hand, advice on how to stock your pantry, and instructions on how to properly store and reheat food.

Part II: From Womb to Highchair: The First 12 Months

The first months of your baby's life are critical in terms of nutrition. In this part, we cut through the mystery of feeding babies and make things simple and straightforward. In Chapter 4, start figuring out the mystery of the milk diet, which your baby embraces during the first four months of life. In Chapter 5, begin feeding solid foods and find out what to start with. In Chapter 6, you explore foods for your crawler from ages 6 months to 1 year.

Part III: Big Changes Ahead: Feeding Your Toddler

Ah, the age of the toddler! A lot of things change around your house, and your toddler's eating needs and habits change, too. In Chapter 7, you find recipes that work with the exploring 12-to-18-month age. Discover advice and recipes in Chapter 8 that help you decide what to feed your growing tyke now that she's 18 months to 2 years old. Finally, in Chapter 9, you find toddler meals and advice for children 2 to 3 years old.