

Note: Information for parents, carers and health care workers on the revised National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC) dietary guidelines and new recommendations about exclusive breastfeeding duration times and the introduction of solid foods.

The revised *Dietary Guidelines for Australian Adults and Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia (including the Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers)* were publicly released on 19 June 2003.

The revised NHMRC dietary guidelines reflect a recent World Health Organization (WHO) recommendation that infants should be exclusively breastfed up to the age of 6 months (the previous recommendation was 4-6 months of age). This means that solids or other complementary * foods should not be introduced until infants are around 6 months of age. This recommendation is for the general infant population, however the guidelines acknowledge that there are individual infants who may benefit from introduction to solids earlier than 6 months (but not before 4 months) of age. Parents are advised to consult their doctor or child health nurse for advice about the individual nutrition needs of your infant.

Current food regulations require packaged infant foods to be labelled with the age from which a food is suitable. This labelling may appear to be inconsistent with the revised NHMRC recommendation on the introduction of solid foods. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has commenced Proposal P274 to review the minimum age labelling requirements in Standard 2.9.2 – Foods for Infants of the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*. As part of the review process, FSANZ will take into consideration the revised NHMRC guidelines, New Zealand infant feeding guidelines, other evidence and recommendations available in addition to submissions from public consultation. FSANZ's review process provides two opportunities for public consultation. For further information on the Proposal P274 – Review Minimum Age Labelling of Foods for Infants and the process FSANZ will use in their review, visit the following web address:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/standardsdevelopment/proposals/index.cfm>

Parents should not be unduly concerned about the changed recommendations on infant feeding. Parents are encouraged to seek further advice from their health care provider if they are unsure of how the new recommendations relate to the feeding of their infant.

- Complementary foods are any food suitable to be fed to infants as a complement to breastmilk or to infant formula when milk alone becomes insufficient to meet the nutritional needs of the infant.