

BY WYNNE EVERETT | GATEHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

For people who don't eat very much, babies can drive up your household food budget. Nursing instead of feeding formula is a no-brainer for saving money. But what do you do when it's time to start your child on baby food?

Skip those overly processed jars of mud-colored food and make your own. During the six months to a year that your child is eating pureed or blended baby food, you can save \$300 to \$500 by making your own, said Cheryl Tallman, whose experience making her children's baby food inspired her to go into business.

"I started making baby food because it was better-tasting and because fresh food tasted better and was more nutritious," she said. "I quickly discovered it could be cheaper, too." Tallman's Fresh Baby company sells baby food freezer trays, dishes, plates and other accessories for homemade baby food.

Parents can find any number of gadgets on the market to help cook, puree and store baby food, but most will discover only a few simple supplies are really essential, Tallman said.

"Honestly, all you need is a stove, a steamer basket and a blender," she said.

When your baby is ready for baby food, start slow, with a couple of easily pureed foods your child is likely to enjoy, she suggests. Recipes for baby food abound in baby food cookbooks, on the Internet and even in the offices of lactation consultants, she said.



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