

# Pointers For Parents

## It's Never Too Early To Introduce The Benefits of Fiber In Child's Diet

(NAPSA)—American adults have become attuned to the importance of fiber in their daily diets, but many are not as aware that fiber provides important health benefits to children as well. These advantages range from supporting normal bowel function to decreasing a child's risk of developing certain disorders later in life. Children can begin reaping these benefits as soon as they are weaned to solid food.

Many children in the United States are not getting adequate fiber in their diets. Surveys have shown that consumption of fat and added sugars greatly exceed recommended levels while fruits, vegetables and grains are below the recommendations. Establishing fiber in children's diets as early as possible may help to set a lifetime pattern of including high fiber foods in their daily diets.

Babies can obtain fiber through FOS (fructooligosaccharides), a naturally occurring carbohydrate commonly found in many fruits and vegetables. A recent conference for pediatric health and nutrition professionals held at Stanford University and sponsored by the Nestlé Nutrition Institute of the Nutrition Division of Nestlé USA, Inc. discussed the effects of FOS, which is similar to soluble fiber and offers many of the same health benefits.

"Anyone on a mixed diet can benefit from having the right amount and type of fiber in their diet, including babies," said Dr. Jose Saavedra, medical and scientific director for the Nestlé Nutrition Division and associate professor of pediatric gastroenterology and nutrition at Johns Hopkins University. "It's important to gradually transition infants to fibers which they can tolerate. FOS is a unique soluble fiber that helps support a healthy digestive system, which is important as a baby adapts to solid foods."

Weaning foods fortified with FOS



have been safely consumed by thousands of babies and toddlers in Asia, Europe and Latin America for years. In America, toddlers already safely consume and enjoy the benefits of FOS in their normal diet. Oligosaccharides (OS), a close relative of FOS, are found in human milk and are believed to provide nutritional and immunological advantages as a "soluble fiber" to breast-fed infants. During the weaning period, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends introducing single-ingredient foods, one at a time, at four to six months of age depending on the developmental readiness of the child. The toddler's diet should include fruits, vegetables, legumes, cereals and other forms of whole grain products—many of which contain a naturally occurring form of FOS.

Now babies have an additional source of soluble fiber made to be just right for their developing digestive systems. Nestlé USA recently fortified its Nestlé Carnation Baby Cereals with Formula, by adding FOS, Baby-Gentle™ Fiber (FOS). This is the first baby cereal with FOS designed to help ease babies' transition to solid foods and to incorporate the benefits of fiber into their diets.

Other FOS-fortified foods could be introduced in the future such as ready-to-eat cereals, yogurt, pudding, and a variety of other foods. For more information about infant nutrition, call 800-259-8238 or visit [www.verybestbaby.com](http://www.verybestbaby.com).