

Better Ways to Get DHA/ARA

Every company seems to be jumping on the DHA/ARA bandwagon. Baby food and formula manufacturers have embraced these additives, saying their products will make our babies smarter and healthier. Imagine—a baby food that will deliver better brain development! Who wouldn't want that for their child?

Here at Yummy Spoonfuls, we've been asked whether we'll choose these additives to improve our product. First, it's important to answer a few basic questions: What is DHA/ARA and why do humans need it in their diet?

DHA and ARA belong to a class of fats that naturally occur in certain foods. DHA and ARA provide nutrition that is essential for brain function, eye health, and cardiovascular health, among other things. The undisputed best source of DHA for infants is breast milk. No man-made substance has ever been able to duplicate the dynamic nature of breast milk.

DHA/ARA is a good thing for the diet. We can all benefit from these essential fatty acids by consuming fish, fish oil, grass fed beef, eggs, nuts and flax seeds. Pure, time-honored foods full of good nutrition keep our bodies healthy and strong—and it's no different for babies and children.

But, make no mistake--the DHA/ARA which is used as an additive in baby foods and formulas is not the same as the substance found in breast milk and nutritious foods. The DHA/ARA food additive comes from chemically extracting single-cell oil from laboratory-grown algae. Commonly, hexane—a toxic substance—is used in this process.

Here at Yummy Spoonfuls, we question the rush to feed yet another additive to our babies. Who knows what the long-term effects might be? No studies have been done to show the long-term effects of these new, highly-processed additives. Babies have sensitive systems, and the benefits of concentrated DHA/ARA are disputed. We believe it is safer to enrich the diet with natural sources of DHA.

Choose wild-caught salmon, sardines and other healthy fish; sea vegetables and mushrooms, whole eggs and grass fed meat are great choices; nuts, nut oils and freshly-ground flax seed can be added to a dish to boost nutrition safely and effectively. The precious oils in these foods do not keep well, so it's best to use them fresh for the best potency.

In his book *In Defense of Food*, expert Michael Pollan paints a vivid picture of how food manufacturers use nutritional fads and health claims to sell the unhealthiest of products. Additives are required once nutrition has been stripped from the food. He recommends one practical test: never eat anything your grandmother wouldn't recognize as food.

Simple, clean fresh food is God's gift to us. Yummy Spoonfuls remains committed to making the purest, best-tasting organic baby food on the planet---with no additives of any kind. That's something grandmother would approve of!