



australian
breastfeeding
association

Media Release

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Babies need real food

Spoon feeding babies pureed food is unnatural and unnecessary and could lead to health problems such as obesity, constipation and babies becoming 'picky eaters' Gill Rapley, deputy Director of UNICEF's UK Baby Friendly Initiative has warned.

Rapley who has been involved in maternal and child health for 25 years, said children should be fed only milk for 6 months. Breastmilk, continues as a major source of nutrients for the first 12 months and beyond, while babies are weaned onto family foods to improve their control over what they eat.

'I found so many parents were coming to me with the same problems — my child is really picky, my child is constipated.' Through these observations and her own studies, Rapley developed her program ***Baby Led Weaning***.

'In 2002 the World Health Organization backed research that found that breastfeeding provided all the nutrition a baby needs during the first 6 months of life and that giving baby other foods during this time would dilute the nutritional value of the milk and might even be harmful to the baby's health.'

Rapley believes the baby food industry is responsible for promoting the unfounded belief that babies need pureed, commercially produced foods. 'Sound scientific research now shows that there is no window of opportunity in a baby's development where babies need more than breastmilk or less than solid food.'

Australian Breastfeeding Association spokesperson Barb Glare said that whilst the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines clearly supported Ms Rapley's stance, baby foods were still able to be advertised as *suitable from 4 months*. 'This is leading to a huge amount of confusion amongst parents who are trying to do the right thing,' she said.

Gill Rapley will be speaking in Australia this week at the Australian Breastfeeding Association's ***Breastfeeding: A work of Heart*** Seminar series.

For more information, and to arrange an interview with Gill Rapley, please contact Barb Glare

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