



Soothe & Nourish

5 Comforting Indian Meals for a Coughing Baby

When a baby has a severe or persistent cough, solid foods cannot cure the illness. The priority is keeping them hydrated, nourished, and comfortable with soft, easy-to-swallow textures that won't irritate a sensitive throat.

Age & Safety Reminder: For babies under 6 months, breast milk or formula should remain the sole source of nutrition. For babies 6 months and older already on solids, introduce these one at a time. **Never give honey to a child under 12 months** due to the risk of infant botulism.

1 Moong Dal Khichdi (Ultra-Soft)

Why it helps: Combines easy-to-digest carbohydrates and gentle proteins. The porridge-like texture slides down without scratching the throat.

Ingredients: 2 tbsp rice, 2 tbsp yellow moong dal, 1.5 cups water, a pinch of turmeric, a drop of ghee.

How to prepare:

1. Wash rice and moong dal thoroughly.
2. Pressure cook with 1.5 cups of water and a tiny pinch of turmeric for 4-5 whistles until very mushy.
3. Mash completely with a spoon or potato masher.
4. Stir in a few drops of ghee and serve lukewarm.

2 Clear Moong Dal Soup (Dal Ka Paani)

Why it helps: Delivers hydration, electrolytes, and light nourishment when the baby refuses heavier foods.

Ingredients: 2 tbsp yellow moong dal, 1.25 cups water, a pinch of roasted cumin (jeera) powder.

How to prepare:

1. Pressure cook washed moong dal with water until completely soft.
2. Whisk well and pass the liquid through a fine strainer to collect a thin, golden soup.
3. Add a pinch of roasted cumin powder and offer in small sips using a spoon or sippy cup.

3 Steamed Carrot & Pumpkin Mash Soup

Why it helps: Gentle on inflamed airways while providing essential vitamins and fluids.

Ingredients: 1/2 small carrot (peeled and diced), a small slice of yellow pumpkin (kaddu), 1 cup water.

How to prepare:

1. Steam or boil the carrot and pumpkin cubes until fork-tender.
2. Blend with the leftover warm cooking water into a smooth, drinkable broth.
3. Strain to ensure zero chunks remain before serving warm.

4 Smooth Ragi or Oats Porridge

Why it helps: Warm, soothing, and coats the throat to temporarily ease coughing bouts triggered by swallowing.

Ingredients: 1.5 tbsp sprouted ragi flour (or powdered rolled oats), 3/4 cup water.

How to prepare:

1. Mix ragi flour or powdered oats into cold water in a small pot, whisking out all lumps.
2. Cook over low heat for 5–7 minutes, stirring continuously until glossy and semi-liquid.
3. Let it cool to lukewarm before feeding.

5 Ghee-Mashed Rice with Warm Lentil Broth

Why it helps: A classic comfort staple that supplies steady energy while remaining extremely bland and non-irritating.

Ingredients: 2 tbsp well-cooked soft rice, 2 tbsp freshly prepared mild dal, 1/4 tsp homemade ghee.

How to prepare:

1. Overcook white rice until completely soft.
2. Mash the rice with the back of a fork until near-pureed.
3. Mix in warm dal broth and a dash of ghee to create a runny consistency.

What to Avoid During a Cough

- **Strong home spices:** Avoid black pepper, raw ginger juice, or heavy ajwain concoctions (kadhas) for infants – they can irritate delicate throat lining and trigger gagging.
- **Chunky or dry foods:** Hard biscuits, whole grains, or thick nuts can cause choking or trigger severe coughing spasms.
- **Force-feeding:** Loss of appetite is normal during illness; offer small, frequent spoonfuls instead.

When to Seek Immediate Medical Care

A "high" or severe cough requires professional evaluation. Consult a pediatrician or visit the ER immediately if you notice:

- Rapid breathing, wheezing, or chest retractions (ribs sucking in while breathing).
- Bluish or pale tint around the lips, tongue, or nail beds.
- High fever, extreme lethargy, or refusal to take any fluids for multiple feeds.
- Continuous, non-stop coughing fits that lead to vomiting or breathlessness.

More gentle, doctor-informed guidance for your little one:

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