



# Baby Food Fruit or Vegetable

## Description

There are two types of fruit or vegetable baby foods on the market, “baby” and “junior”. They are essentially the same, except for the texture of the product. Regular baby foods feature particles small enough that they cannot be felt on the palate, and this is achieved by homogenization. Junior baby foods are coarser and are not processed with high-energy equipment.

## Objective

The purpose is to prepare a baby food of sufficient fineness to help eliminate any possibility of an infant choking on the product and to provide maximum digestibility. In addition, it is preferred that the product be non-separating, since many manufacturers package in glass containers.

## Equipment and Process

The Gaulin and Rannie homogenizers being used have operating pressures from 1000 to 8000 psi, depending on ingredients. A homogenizing valve assembly of cobalt-based, wear-resistant alloy is used, as opposed to carbide, to avoid the possibility of carbide particles contaminating the product.

The fruit or vegetable is reduced in size by passing through a pulper or a hammer mill. Seeds should be removed prior to homogenization. The resulting slurry is heated to inactivate enzymes, homogenized and packaged. For maximum body and reduction of water separation upon standing, the product should be homogenized immediately after heating.

As referenced above, the homogenizing pressure is a function of the ingredients. For example, tomato products require low pressure or the product becomes excessively smooth to the palate; whereas, the woody vegetables and more solid fruits require high energy to produce the required body or smoothness.

After packaging the product is autoclaved.

## Testing

Shelf life testing is used to determine whether any separation occurs. Microscopic or screen tests may be run to determine maximum size of the particles.

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