









Abstract

“Baby” Food Pouches and Their Use in 1–3.9-Year-Old New Zealand Children †

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Abstract: Baby food pouches are becoming an increasingly popular way to assist the transition from breast milk or infant formula to solid foods, both in New Zealand (NZ) and worldwide. These pouches have overtaken the market in NZ supermarkets, with 63.9% of total baby foods sold in 2021 being in pouch form. While most pouches are aimed at infants, some are pitched to an older age group, and it is possible that some toddlers and preschoolers continue to consume baby food pouches well beyond 12 months of age. Despite concerns raised by a number of health agencies, there has been almost no research undertaken on the use of “baby” food pouches by children, and related health effects. Therefore, this study aims to describe how “baby” food pouches are being used by young children in NZ. In Young Foods NZ, an observational cross-sectional study, 287 participants with children aged 1–3.9 years completed a feeding questionnaire about the child’s “baby” food pouch consumption including frequency, method of use, and setting. The majority (85.4%) of children had used a pouch at some time in their life; however, only 11.1% were current ‘frequent’ pouch users (i.e., used baby food pouches five or more times a week). Sixty-five percent of pouch users always consumed the contents by sucking straight from the nozzle. Chair (22.8%), highchair (25.7%), and while “on the go” (23.1%) were the most common locations where pouches were consumed. Overall, while most young children had tried a “baby” food pouch at some point in their life, relatively few were considered frequent pouch users. These findings suggest pouches are not contributing substantially to most young NZ children’s diets. However, over half of pouch users sucked the contents directly from the nozzle, and this may have implications for dental health and oral motor skill development.

Keywords: food pouches; toddlers; pre-school children; commercial infant food



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