

Annaprashana

This is the ceremony for the first feeding of payesh (boiled rice, milk & sugar). The object of this ceremony is to pray to the gods with Mantras (special words) to bless the child with good digestive powers, good thoughts and talents. It is performed when the child is six months old which is the weaning time and the ceremony also indicates the time at which the child starts to move from its reliance on its mother to doing things for itself.

The child will generally be held in the mother's lap, and a senior male family member (grandfather or uncle) will feed it a small spoonful of the payesh, to general celebration. Other members of the family then take turns to give the child a taste.

The feeding ceremony is often followed with a game, in which the child is presented with a tray containing a number of objects. These will include a bangle or jewel (symbolising wealth), a book (symbolising learning), a pen (symbolising career) and a clay pot or container of earth/soil (symbolising property). The child's future direction and prospects in life are indicated by the object which it prefers to hold and play with.

Some Hindus feed the baby different foods with different flavors. Some suggest a mixture of honey, yogurt, and butter. Others recommend meat. The meat of every animal and bird is believed to have a different quality, which is imparted to the child. For example, fish is believed to give swiftness.

Stage 1: Read the information on Annaprashana (above) and summarise it in 5 bullet points. Make sure you read it properly before you begin. You have 15 minutes.

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- The uncle/grandfather feed the baby the first spoonful of Payesh
- Other family members feed the baby by
- Afterwards the baby is presented with a tray of objects symbolising wealth and good fortune.
- Payesh is made of boiled, milk & ^{Sugar} ~~sugar~~

Stage 2: Read the information on Annaprashana and the bullet point summary (over the page) then draw a diagram with labels to show what happens in the ceremony.



Stage 3: Look at all the information already present and draw a diagram with labels to show the spiritual dimension of the ceremony. The diagram does not need to show what is happening on the outside, but what is happening on the inside.

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