

Formula feeding

Description:

If breastfeeding isn't possible, feed your baby with infant formula. Talk to a doctor or child health nurse before you start bottle feeding. Follow the instructions on the can to make the formula just right for your baby. Sterilise bottles by boiling, steaming or using special chemicals. Wash your hands before you prepare a bottle. Feed your baby on demand. Hold your baby while they're drinking their bottle.

Bottle feeding:

If breastfeeding is not possible, the use of an infant formula with added vitamins, minerals, protein, fat and carbohydrate is recommended. Cows milk-based formula is suitable for most babies and is recommended over formulas made from soy or goats milk. These and other specialised formulas should only be used under the advice of a health professional. Regular unmodified cows or goats milk is not suitable for babies and should never be used in the first 12 months. If your baby is formula fed, please seek advice on formula from your doctor, child health nurse or dietitian. It is recommended to keep your baby on formula until 12 months of age.

Getting started:

It is recommended to make formula and feed immediately. Here is a list of steps for you to follow:

- Ensure all preparation surfaces are clean.
- Wash hands using soap and water.
- Bring sufficient water to a rolling boil (if using an automatic kettle, let it switch off).
- Pour water that has been cooled for no more than 30 minutes into the bottle.
- Add exact amount of formula. Use the instructions on the can to make the formula just right for your baby. Too strong and it will hurt their kidneys; too weak and your baby won't grow well. Measure the formula carefully, using the scoop from the container. Level with a knife. Take care not to mix up scoops from other containers.
- Quickly cool to feeding temperature (under running tap water or placing the bottle in a container of cold water).
- Dry the outside of the bottle.
- Check the temperature and feed your baby.
- Discard any feed that has not been consumed within 2 hours.
- Only keep made-up formula in the fridge for 24 hours.
- Only put formula and water in the bottle. Do not add cereal, sugar, cordial or anything else.
- Do not use a bottle to give soft drink, tea or cordial. These are not good drinks for a baby and will greatly increase their chance of getting tooth decay.
- Hold your baby close when feeding. Do not leave your baby alone to drink the bottle.

Preparing feeds in advance:

It is best to make powdered infant formula for each feed and to feed baby immediately. If, however, feeds need to be prepared in advance:

- place made-up cooled feed in the refrigerator (temperature no higher than 5^o C)
- feeds can be stored in the fridge for up to 24 hours.

Rewarming formula:

- Formula should not be removed from the refrigerator and rewarmed until immediately before feeding.
- Stand the bottle of formula in a container of hot water for a few minutes (no more than 10 minutes).
- Before feeding your baby, check the temperature of the feed by letting a little milk drop onto the inside of your wrist. It should feel comfortably warm or even a little bit cool.
- Never use a microwave to rewarm feeds.
- Discard any rewarmed feed that has not been consumed within 2 hours.

Transportation of formula:

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- Feeds that need to be transported should be quickly cooled and refrigerated (in a refrigerator with a temperature no higher than 5C) until they are cold before transporting.
- Do not remove the feed from the refrigerator until immediately before transporting.
- Transport feeds in a cool bag with ice bricks and use within 2 hours. If you reach the destination within 2 hours, place in the refrigerator at the destination and hold for no more than 24 hours from the time of preparation.
- Alternatively, if going out for the day, carry individual portions of the powdered formula in washed and sterilised containers and at the destination use hot water no less than 70C to prepare the feed.

Cleaning infant feeding equipment:

Thoroughly clean bottles and teats manually or in a dishwasher. Bottles and teats can be sterilised using boiling or steaming methods. (Use commercial steamers according to the manufacturers' instructions).

Boiling method

- Wash hands.
- Wash teats and bottles in hot, soapy water using a bottle brush and rinse well.
- Place equipment in a saucepan of cold water.
- Bring to the boil and boil for five minutes, turn off and allow to cool.
- Store dry sterilised equipment in a clean, covered container.
- Sterilised equipment can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.

How much milk?:

Bottle fed babies should be fed on demand. Each baby is different and needs vary from day to day. Refer to the *Is my baby getting enough milk?* fact sheet if you are concerned about how much your baby is drinking. The following can be used as a general guide.

- 5 days-3 months: 150ml/kg bodyweight/day
- 3-6 months: 120ml/kg bodyweight/day
- 6-12 months: 100ml/kg bodyweight/day
- It is important that infant formula is made up according to the directions and is not too diluted or over concentrated. **Avoid using the microwave for heating bottles!**

Microwaves do not heat liquids evenly. Hot spots can form and burn your baby's mouth. It may take a while to settle into a feeding routine that suits you both. Your baby may want to be fed as often as every three hours during the day. You do not need to follow an exact routine. When the baby sleeps through a night feed, it means they no longer need it. Do not wake the baby to feed it. Feeding time may last 20 to 30 minutes. **How to feed** Seat yourself comfortably and hold the baby in your arms while giving the bottle. A baby's skull is soft and deformities in shape can occur if baby always places their head in the same position. For this reason you should avoid always using the same position during bottle feeding. Hold the bottle tilted, with the neck and teat filled with formula. If your baby does not firmly grip the teat, gently press under their chin with your middle finger and slightly withdraw the teat to encourage sucking. This method will help prevent the baby from swallowing air, which can cause wind pain. Check the bottle flow. When the bottle is upside down, the milk should drop at a steady flow from the teat. Sometimes the teat gets clogged when a powdered formula is used. Check teats often. Even when fed properly, a baby swallows some air. Hold your baby upright over your shoulder or upright on your lap with your hands supporting under the chin. Pat or rub the middle of their back gently until they burp. If the baby is feeding happily, don't stop until they are ready! Watch for signs that your baby has had enough.

Acknowledgements:

This fact sheet is consistent with current *Infant Feeding Guidelines and Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*, as produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council. It is also based on information drawn heavily from:

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Infant and Toddler Feeding Guide, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District, 2004. *Breastfeeding: A Simple Guide to Help You Establish Breastfeeding*, Community Child Health Service, Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District, 2004. *Growing Strong: Feeding You and Your Baby*, Public Health Services, Queensland Health, 2003. *Optimal Infant Nutrition: Evidence Based Guidelines 2003-2008*, Queensland Health, 2003. This fact sheet is also the result of input and effort from many health professionals in Queensland. Their help with the content is greatly appreciated.