

# Formula feeding

## Bottle feeding

### Remember...

- 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.

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 given as a drink 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 "in the bottle" one at a time and feed immediately.

Check the instructions on the formula can and always use the scoop provided with the formula can being used.

Clean and sterilise the bottle, teat and other feeding equipment before you start (see Cleaning infant feeding equipment information on this fact sheet).

1. Clean surfaces where formula will be made with a clean cloth.
2. Wash hands using soap and water and dry well.
3. Fill kettle or electric jug with fresh tap water and bring the water to the boil. Kettles and jugs with no automatic cut-off should be switched off within 30 seconds of boiling.
4. Always allow water to cool before adding formula.
5. Pour the required amount of cooled, boiled water into the bottle.
6. Add the required number of scoops of formula to the water. Use a clean knife to level off each scoop and do not pack down the formula in the scoop. Too strong and it will hurt your baby's kidneys; too weak and your baby won't grow well.
7. Seal bottle with a cap and disc and shake to mix the formula with the water.
8. Discard any formula that has been offered to the baby and not been consumed within 1 hour. Do not reheat half-empty bottles.
9. Made up formula can be stored in the middle or back of the fridge for 24 hours. Do not store in the door and throw out any unused formula after 24 hours.
10. Only put formula and water in the bottle. Do not add cereal, sugar or anything else.
11. Do not use a bottle to give soft drinks, tea or cordial. These are not good drinks for a baby and will greatly increase their chance of getting tooth decay.
12. 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 feed in middle or back of the refrigerator, but not in the door (temperature no higher than 5°C)
- feeds can be stored in the fridge for up to 24 hours.

### Rewarming formula

It is safe to give cool formula to babies; however, most babies seem to prefer to have it warmed.

- 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 the microwave to rewarm feeds.
- Discard any rewarmed feed that has not been consumed within one hour.

### Transportation of formula

- The safest way to transport formula feeds is to carry individual portions of the powdered formula and the cooled boiled water in separate sterile containers, and make up the formula when required.
- Alternatively, the formula can be made up and quickly cooled and refrigerated (temperature no higher than 5°C) until they are cold before transporting.
- Do not remove the feed from the refrigerator until immediately before transporting.
- Transport feeds in an insulated bag with ice bricks and use within two hours. If you reach the destination within two hours, place in the refrigerator at the destination and use within 24 hours from the time of preparation.

### Cleaning infant feeding equipment

(bottles and teats)

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 for a feed. 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. 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 hand 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:

- 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.

To access the full set of fact sheets, go to

<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/child&youth/factsheets>.