

Tips for Making and Feeding Formula to Your Infant

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first 6 months. Research has shown that there are many benefits to both baby and mother. If your breastfed baby needs more milk, your own breastmilk expressed by hand or a pump is the best option. If you are considering supplementing breastmilk with formula and/or may return to breastfeeding, please speak with a lactation consultant for important information and support.

If breastfeeding is not possible, choose a cow's milk based iron-fortified formula and consider these tips to help you keep your baby healthy.

How long to use formula

- Plan to use formula until your baby is 9 to 12 months old. Once your baby is eating iron-rich foods at least 3 times daily you can start introducing 3% cow's milk.
- Cow's milk has very little iron. Iron is important for babies to be healthy.
- Foods with iron are meat, poultry, fish, mashed lentils, beans, tofu and cooked egg yolk.
- Skim, 1% and 2% milk do not have enough calories for your baby to grow. Choose 3% milk for babies first two years of life.

What to look for when buying formula

- Always buy formula with iron to keep your baby's blood healthy.
- Always check the expiry date. Expired formula will not give your baby all the nutrients they need to stay healthy.
- Always check the label for the type of formula you are buying for your baby.
- The three types of formulas are:
 - Ready to use
 - Concentrated liquid
 - Powdered

Homemade or evaporated milk is not the same as formula

- Homemade or evaporated milk is missing iron and vitamins that your baby needs. It should not be used in place of formula.



Preparing formula

Make sure everything is clean

- Wash your hands.
- Wash all feeding equipment in hot, soapy water.
- Rinse well with hot water.



Sterilize equipment

- Place equipment in a pot of water. The water should completely cover everything in the pot.
- Cover the pot and bring water to a boil.
- Continue boiling for 2 minutes.
- Let cool and remove the equipment with sterilized tongs.

Water and mixing

- Use cold tap water or commercial bottled water and heat until it reaches a rolling boil. Continue to boil for 2 minutes. Do not use carbonated, distilled or mineral water.
- Always use the amount of formula recommended from manufacturer's instructions. Never add extra formula, water or other food or drinks.

Different types of formulas

Powder

- Using a liquid measuring cup, pour the exact amount of previously boiled water, cooled to 70°C (takes about 30 minutes). This temperature will help to kill any bacteria in the powdered formula and protect the protein.
- Add the correct number of level scoops of powder to the water. The scoop comes with the powdered formula.
- Cover and shake well to mix.
- Refrigerate and use within 24 hours.
- Powdered formula can have harmful bacteria. Check Health Canada's food recall page regularly.

Liquid concentrate

- Wash the top of the formula can.
- Shake the can well and open.
- Follow manufacturers instructions, using previously boiled, cooled water. Stir.
- Refrigerate and use within the time noted in the instructions.

Ready-to-use

- Shake the can well before opening. Wash the top of the can, open and pour into the bottle.
- Refrigerate opened cans of ready-to-feed formulas and use within 24 to 48 hours.

Parents often ask how much to feed their infant at each meal. Infants have small stomachs, so they will need to eat more often to get enough food each day to grow. Below are charts that show how much an infant stomach can hold each time the baby eats in the first 3 weeks and how much formula to make each day.

It is more important to learn your baby's cues when she is hungry and full, than to feed a certain amount of formula.

Approximate amounts for each feeding

| Day 1–2 | Day 3–4 | Day 5–7 | Week 2–3 |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 5 to 10 ml | 15 to 25 ml | 45 to 60 ml | 60 to 90 ml |

Approximate amount of formula to make each day

This is only a guide for the amount of formula to prepare each day. Every baby's needs are different.

| Age of Baby | Minimum number of feedings | Approximate amount of formula to make each day | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------|
| | | Ounces | Millilitres (ml) |
| Birth – 24 hrs (0 – 1 day) | 8 | 1 ½ – 2 | 40 – 60 |
| 24 – 48 hrs (1 – 2 days) | 8 | 2 ½ – 4 | 80 – 120 |
| 48 – 72 hrs (2 – 3 days) | 8 | 4 – 8 | 120 – 140 |
| 72 – 96 hrs (3 – 4 days) | 8 | 8 – 16 | 240 – 480 |
| 4 – 7 days | 8 | 10 – 20 | 300 – 600 |
| 2 – 4 weeks | 8 | 15 – 20 | 450 – 750 |
| 2 – 5 months | 8 | 25 – 35 | 750 – 1050 |
| 6 – 8 months | 4 | 25 – 35 | 480 – 1110 |
| 9 – 11 months* | 3 | 16 – 33 | 480 – 990 |
| 12 months* | 3 | 16 – 21 | 480 – 630 |

* Part of this can be 3% cow's milk if you baby is eating food from all four food groups. Adaped from York Region Health Connection. Adapted from Practice Based Evidence in Nutrition (2012) and If Baby Needs More Milk, York Region (2013).

Warming formula for baby

Place closed container of formula in a bowl of very warm water or hold the bottle under running warm tap water.

- Shake the bottle and check the temperature by putting a couple of drops of the heated formula on your wrist. It should feel warm, not hot.

- Do not heat in a microwave. The heat is uneven and can cause "hot spots" that burn your baby's mouth.
- Warming formula is not necessary but most babies prefer it to be at least room temperature.

Best way to feed baby

- Find a comfortable place where you and your baby can both relax.
- Always hold a baby during feeding.
- Hold baby's head higher than the rest of the body.
- Most babies swallow some air and need to be burped during a break in the feeding or at the end.



- Always stop feeding if baby shows any signs of choking like swallowing quickly without taking a breath, milk spilling from mouth, eyes opening widely, lips turning blue or nostrils flaring.
- If using a bottle:
 - Tip the bottle so that the nipple is partially filled with formula. This will slow the flow of formula to the baby's tummy.
 - Never prop the bottle or put a baby to bed with a bottle. It may cause choking and can cause baby's teeth to decay.
 - Never put cereals in a bottle, as this may cause choking.
 - Babies do not need juice or other sweet drinks. These drinks have more sugar and can cause tooth decay.

Signs your baby is full

- Your baby may close his lips, stop sucking, turn his head away, cry, bite the nipple or cover his mouth with his hands. Don't encourage your baby to eat more when they show you they are satisfied.
- Sometimes a baby will pause for a bit. Offer the formula again, but if baby refuses, he's probably had enough.
- Throw out left-over formula at the end of the feeding.
- Babies who are still hungry will continue to open their mouths for food and may be upset when the food is taken away.

Cleaning babies teeth and gums

- After feeding wipe your babies gums with a clean, warm, damp cloth. As baby grows teeth use a toothbrush with soft bristles.



Storing formula

- Store unopened cans away from heat or light.
- Check the expiry date and discard outdated infant formula.
- Don't leave prepared formula at room temperature for more than one hour.
- Do not freeze.

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More information is available at [BestStart.org](https://www.BestStart.org)
Infant Formula: What You Need to Know

