



## Formula feeding your baby

If you have chosen to feed your baby formula, please read the information in this packet to be sure you are feeding your baby safely. Please be sure you are using infant formula and not straight cow's milk. Babies should not be fed straight cow's milk until they are a year old because it is too difficult for them to digest and does not contain the right mix of nutrients for a human newborn.

Formula is made by modifying cow's milk and adding vitamins, minerals, and iron. You should use a formula made with cow's milk, not soy, unless there is a clear medical reason not to use cow's milk. All brands of formula are required to have the same basic nutrients, so you may choose whatever brand you like, even if it is different from what your baby received in the hospital. (If there is a strong history of allergies in the baby's family, talk to your pediatric provider about whether a special brand of formula should be used.) Be sure the formula you choose contains iron. Most formulas do not contain fluoride. Talk with your pediatric provider about whether your baby should receive fluoride supplements.

In the first four to six months, your baby's digestive system is still immature. He will be able to digest human milk or infant formula, but does not need solids (like cereals, fruits, vegetables), juices, or extra water during this time. Some families believe that adding cereal early, or adding cereal to the bottle, has benefits such as helping the baby to sleep better. This may not be healthy because allergies and other problems can occur. Please be sure to ask your pediatric provider any questions you may have about feeding your baby.

### Types of formula

As noted above, you may use any brand of cow's milk-based formula with iron. Check the expiration date on whatever type you are using to make sure it is fresh. You can buy formula in three different forms:

- ◆ **Ready-to-feed** – This formula is already mixed and ready for your baby. You do not have to add water. It will say, "Ready to feed" on the package. Most brands come in a large, 32-ounce can. Some brands also package this type of formula in individual, six-ounce bottles.
- ◆ **Concentrated liquid** – This type must be mixed with water before being given to your baby. You will see the word "concentrated" on the can. Be sure to follow the directions on the can and the instructions below to mix the formula. Too much or too little water may be harmful to your baby.
- ◆ **Powder** – This type also must be mixed with water before being given to your baby. Be sure to follow the directions on the package and the instructions below to mix the formula. Too much or too little water may be harmful to your baby.

### Preparing bottles

You will need to buy bottles and nipples. There are many different varieties. Use what works best for you and your baby. There are glass bottles, plastic bottles, and special nurser bags that fit into a plastic holder. Nipples also come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

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**Cleaning bottles and other items** – All glass bottles, plastic bottles, bottle tops/caps, nipples, and mixing materials such as measuring spoons or cups should be cleaned with hot, soapy water and rinsed well with hot water before using. Wash again after each use. Please use mild dishwashing liquid, not one with an antibacterial agent. (Plastic nurser bags do not need to be washed. They are disposable and should be thrown away after one use.)

## **Preparing formula**

Use the instructions for the type of formula you have.

### ◆ **Ready-to-feed**

- ✓ Wash the can opener and the top of the can before opening.
- ✓ Pour the desired amount of formula into a clean bottle or bottles, then put on the cap(s) and top(s). If you are not feeding your baby right away, put the bottle(s) in the refrigerator. Mark the date and time, and use the bottle(s) within 48 hours.
- ✓ Mark the open can of formula with the date and time it was opened. Refrigerate the open can. Throw away anything in the can that has not been used in 48 hours.
- ✓ Ready-to-feed formula that is in a bottle at room temperature must be fed to your baby within one hour. (If you bought the ready-to-feed formula that is already in a bottle, you may store **unopened** bottles at room temperature or in the refrigerator. Once the bottle has been opened, it must be refrigerated or given to your baby within one hour.)

### ◆ **Concentrate**

- ✓ Concentrated formula needs to be mixed with water. Please check with your pediatric provider about whether you need to boil the water first. If you will be boiling water, **you must boil the water before you need to prepare bottles** so the water has time to cool before you add it to the formula concentrate. If you have not yet spoken to your pediatric provider about whether to boil the water, please follow the mixing instructions on the formula package.
- ✓ Before opening the can of concentrated formula, first wash the can opener and the top of the can.
- ✓ Mix the formula according to the directions on the package. Do not use too much or too little water.
- ✓ Do not use a blender. It can be unsanitary. Mix by shaking well.
- ✓ Put the mixed formula into the bottles you have cleaned, put on the caps and tops, and store in the refrigerator.
- ✓ Mark the bottles with the date and time they were mixed. Throw away any bottles that you have not used in 48 hours.
- ✓ Mark the open cans of concentrate with the date and time the can was opened. Put the open can in the refrigerator, and throw away any unused portions after 48 hours.
- ✓ Once you take a bottle out of the refrigerator to give to your baby, it must be used within one hour.

### ◆ **Powder**

- ✓ Powdered formula needs to be mixed with water. Please check with your pediatric provider about whether you need to boil the water first. If you will be

boiling water, **you must boil the water before you need to prepare bottles** so the water has time to cool before you add it to the powder. If you have not yet spoken to your pediatric provider about whether to boil the water, please follow the mixing instructions on the formula package.

- ✓ Mix the formula according to the directions on the package. Do not use too much or too little water.
- ✓ Do not use a blender. It can be unsanitary. Mix by shaking well.
- ✓ Put the formula into the bottles you have cleaned, put on the caps and tops, and store in the refrigerator.
- ✓ Mark the bottles with the date and time they were mixed. Throw away any bottles that you have not used in 24 hours.
- ✓ Mark the open can of powder. Store in a cool, dry place. Throw away any powder you have not used in one month.
- ✓ Once you take a bottle out of the refrigerator to give to your baby, it must be used within one hour.

## Feeding your baby

Use these guidelines as you feed your baby. Please ask your pediatric provider if you have any questions about feeding.

- ◆ Always wash your hands before feeding.
- ◆ You may use formula that is cold, warm, or at room temperature. If you wish to warm a bottle, place it in a pan of hot water. Test the temperature of the formula by shaking a small amount onto the inside of your wrist.
- ◆ **Do not warm bottles in the microwave** as pockets of very hot liquid can form and harm your baby. If you microwave, you may find that drops of formula you shake from the bottle are not hot. However, because of the way microwaves work, there may be very hot liquid deeper inside the bottle.
- ◆ The amount of formula the baby will take varies according to her size, age, activity level, and other factors. Remember, the newborn's stomach is about the size of her own fist, so she can easily be filled up with a small amount of formula.
- ◆ Because his stomach is small, your baby needs to be fed often – about every 3-4 hours for most babies. (Breastfed babies feed more often because breast milk is digested more quickly.)
- ◆ In her first few days of life, your baby will probably take about ½ - 1 ounce at each feeding. Soon, she will want more. Try increasing feedings by ½ ounce as she becomes more hungry and continues to grow. If the baby shows continuing signs of hunger, increase the next feeding by ½ ounce.
- ◆ Remember, you should not feed your baby any formula that has been out of the refrigerator for more than one hour.
- ◆ When your baby is done with a feeding, throw away anything left in the bottle; do not put the bottle back in the refrigerator. During bottle feeding, formula mixes with the natural bacteria from your baby's mouth. If the left-over formula is stored, the bacteria can

**Feeding cues** – Your baby may show any of these signs when he/she is hungry:

- ◆ eye movements under the lids
- ◆ stirring/stretching
- ◆ making sucking motions
- ◆ bringing hands to mouth
- ◆ “rooting” motions
- ◆ uttering sounds
- ◆ restlessness or slight fussiness
- ◆ crying



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continue to grow. If this stored formula is then given **back** to your baby, he may become sick. (Since you may not save formula left over after a feeding, be sure to prepare bottles in small amounts in the early weeks so you are not wasting a lot of formula.)

- ◆ The younger and smaller the baby, the more frequently she will need to feed until her stomach size increases.
- ◆ **Never** prop a bottle for a feeding and leave your baby alone. He may choke. Also, propping a bottle may cause ear infections and tooth cavities. And remember – holding and interacting with a feeding infant is important to his development.

### Has your baby had the right amount?

It can sometimes be difficult to tell if a formula-fed baby is getting the right amount. Your baby’s health care provider can help you make sure you are not over-feeding or under-feeding your baby. The following guidelines may also help.

- ◆ Feed your newborn when she shows signs of hunger (see box on previous page for examples).
- ◆ Your baby should eat at least every 3-4 hours, even if he is sleepy and not showing hunger signs. During the day, wake your sleepy baby to eat after 3-4 hours. At night, it is okay to let him go a little longer between feedings, but most babies will need to eat several times at night for at least the first few months.
- ◆ Although every baby’s feeding pattern is different, use the following chart as a general guide as to how much your baby should be eating. If her pattern is very different from this – either much more or much less eating – please contact your baby’s pediatric provider for advice.

Age	Number of feedings in 24 hours	How much per feeding
Birth-2 weeks	6-10	1/2-2 oz.
2 weeks-1 month	6-8	3-4 oz.
1-3 months	5-6	5-6 oz.

- ◆ The best way to tell if your baby is getting enough is to keep track of wet and soiled diapers. Use the chart included with this handout to record your baby’s feedings and diaper changes, and for more information on what patterns you should see as your baby grows.
- ◆ Sometimes, formula-fed babies get too much formula. Your baby’s health care provider will help you monitor your baby’s weight and feeding patterns and will let you know if you may be over-feeding your baby.