



Family Beginnings

Formula Feeding Your Infant

This guide offers tips on safely preparing, handling, storing and feeding infant formula (also called milk substitute). The staff at Family Beginnings of Women's Hospital, part of Greenville Health System, have created this guide to share the most up-to-date medical evidence related to formula feeding your baby.

Perhaps you have decided to exclusively feed your baby milk substitute. Or maybe you are a breastfeeding mother who needs to provide milk substitute for a medical reason. No matter what the reason, we are here to help you and your new baby get off to a healthy start.

General Tips

- Wash your countertop where formula will be prepared.
- Wash your hands with soap and water. Then, use a clean towel or single-use paper towel to dry them.
- Have clean feeding supplies. Boil all bottles, nipples, caps, rings and formula storage containers in water for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Let your feeding supplies air-dry on a clean dishtowel.
- Shake the formula can well before opening it.
- Wash the top of the can with soap and water before opening it. Let the top air-dry.
- Follow preparation instructions on your formula can or bottle.
- Check the expiration date stamped on the can or bottle. Do not use any formula products past the expiration date.
- After making formula, feed it to your baby right away or keep it in the refrigerator. Do not keep prepared formula at room temperature for more than 1 hour. Do not freeze prepared formula.

Powdered Formula

- Place clean tap water into a pan. Heat water to a rolling boil. Boil water for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the pan from heat and allow water to cool for 20 to 25 minutes.

- Open the can of powdered formula. After 1 month, an opened can must be thrown away. Store all unopened formula cans in a cool, dry place.
- Pour 2 ounces of the cooled, boiled water into the bottle. You may use "nursery water" to make formula, but it is not necessary. DO NOT use any other type of bottled water.
- Add 1 unpacked, level scoop of formula powder. Make sure the scoop is filled with powder but not heaping over the top.
- Put a nipple or cap on the bottle. Make sure the cap is on tight. Cover and shake the bottle well until any clumps disappear.
- If you are going to feed your baby right away, check that the formula is not too hot. If too hot, run cold water over the bottom of the bottle until it feels only slightly warm to the touch. If you are not going to feed your baby right away, place prepared formula in the refrigerator.
- Throw away leftover formula in the bottle after 1 hour.
- Keep prepared (unused) formula made from powder in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.

Ready to Feed (RTF)

- Do not add water to this formula. Pour in the formula amount needed for this feeding, and you are ready. Keep the remaining formula in the refrigerator.
- DO NOT use the microwave to warm your baby's bottle. See "Tips for Warming Bottles."
- Remember to use a clean nipple for each feeding.
- Feed your baby right away, or cover and place the formula in the refrigerator.
- Throw away leftover formula in the bottle after 1 hour.
- Keep ready-to-feed formula covered in the refrigerator for up to 48 hours.

Liquid Concentrate (Liq Conc)

- Place clean tap water into a pan. Heat the water to a rolling boil. Boil water for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the pan from heat and allow water to cool for 20 to 25 minutes.
- If using a can opener, make sure it is clean before use.
- Pour 1 ounce of liquid concentrate into the bottle.
- Add 1 ounce of the cooled, boiled water to the bottle. You may use “nursery water” to make formula, but it is not necessary. DO NOT use any other type of bottled water.
- Put a nipple or cap on the bottle. Make sure the cap is on tight. Shake the bottle well.
- If you are going to feed your baby right away, check that the formula is not too hot. If too hot, run cold water over the bottom of the bottle until it feels only slightly warm to the touch. If you are not going to feed your baby right away, place prepared formula in the refrigerator. Keep remaining opened, unprepared concentrate in the refrigerator for up to 48 hours.

Tips for Warming Bottles

- Warm the bottle right before the baby is ready to eat. Warm just enough formula for that feeding.
- NEVER warm the bottle in the microwave. Doing so can cause uneven heating and increase the risk for your baby burning his or her mouth.
- Warm the bottle by placing the prepared bottle in a clean cup of warm water or purchasing a bottle warmer.
- When you think the bottle is warm enough, shake it to even out the formula temperature. Remove the formula cap and screw on the nipple.
- Before feeding your baby, make sure the formula is a safe temperature. Splash a few drops of the warmed formula onto your wrist. It should be warm or cool but not hot.

Whether you are breastfeeding or formula feeding, cradle your baby in your arms close to your body and make eye contact when feeding. Position your baby in a semi-upright position, not lying flat. Start feeding by rubbing the nipple gently across your baby’s lower lip. When you can see that your infant’s mouth is open, gently insert the nipple, aiming it toward the roof of the mouth over the tongue.

Ensure your baby’s lips are pursed open over the nipple and not just sucking on the end. Lips pursed open over the nipple allow for a good suck reflex and create a good seal on the nipple (not too fast and not too slow).

Tilt the bottle so that milk always covers the end of the nipple while feeding, which decreases the chance that your baby will swallow air. Burp your baby in the middle and at the end of the feed or when your baby starts to fall asleep.

If you are planning to breastfeed, ask us about “alternative” feeding methods. One example is cup feeding. Babies of all ages can drink from a cup with help. Drinking from a cup is more similar to breastfeeding than drinking from a bottle. Your baby needs to take an active role when drinking from a cup—the tongue is in a similar position when breastfeeding. We also may use a syringe for finger feeding or a flexible feeding tube at the breast to feed your infant.

If you have any feeding questions after reading these tips, please contact one of your nurses. We look forward to assisting you during this special time, both in the hospital and once you go home with your new bundle of joy.