

The World Health Organization recommends babies are breastfed. If you are unable or choose not to fully breastfeed, it is important to give your baby an infant formula if they are under 12 months old. Cow's milk based formula is suitable for most babies and is recommended over others such as goat or soy formula.

Formula must be prepared according to the instructions on the label. Use utensils that are clean and sterilise all equipment for the first 12 months. Incorrectly prepared formula, unboiled water and unsterilised equipment can make a baby ill.

If you are formula feeding from birth, your midwife will advise you what you need to bring to the hospital. You may need to bring a tin of formula suitable for a newborn baby and sterilised bottles.

## Cleaning equipment

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water, dry with a clean towel.
- Discard leftover formula. Rinse bottles and teats in cold, running water.
- Wash in warm, soapy water using a clean bottle brush. Squeeze soapy water through the teat holes.
- Rinse under running water and squeeze water through teat holes again.
- Equipment is now ready to sterilise.

## Sterilisation using the boiling method

- Place washed equipment in a large saucepan.
- Cover with water, ensuring all equipment is submerged with no air bubbles.
- Bring the water to the boil and boil for five minutes.
- Allow the equipment to cool (to avoid burns) in the saucepan then remove with clean tongs or clean hands. Shake off excess water.
- Store sterilised equipment in a clean, sealed container in the fridge for up to 24 hours. Re-sterilise any unused equipment after 24 hours.

## Sterilising using a microwave or electric steam sterilising unit

- Ensure your steriliser is out of the reach of children.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use caution when unloading the steriliser, steam and water can cause burns.

## Chemical disinfection method

- You can disinfect your equipment in an antibacterial chemical solution that comes as tablets or a concentrated liquid.
- Store the chemicals and the solution well out of reach of children.
- Use plastic or glass containers and equipment as the chemical will cause metal to corrode.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

## Preparation of formula feeds

- Follow the instructions on the tin of formula to determine the number of measuring scoops and the amount of water to use. Use the correct number scoops to the amount of water as instructed on the formula tin. Do not add half scoops or more scoops than stated in the instructions. Using more or less powder than indicated can make your baby ill.
- The feeding table on the formula tin is a guide to how much formula your baby may need. Your baby may need more or less than indicated. Your health professional can advise you.

## Method

- Wash and dry hands before preparing formula. Prepare formula in a clean area.
- Ideally prepare formula just before a feed. Some parents choose to make it up ahead of time, but it needs to be stored in the fridge and used within 24 hours.
- Empty and refill kettle with fresh tap water, then boil and let it cool before use.
- Pour the water into the bottle first, then add the powder.
- Always use a full scoop (never a half scoop).
- Always use the measuring scoop provided in the tin as scoop sizes differ between formulas.
- Fill the scoop with powder and tap it lightly to remove any air bubbles. Level off the scoop.
- Put the teat and lid on the bottle and shake well.
- Do not wash the formula scoop.

## Storage

- Store made up formula at the back of fridge (not in the door) and use within 24 hours.
- Store cans of formula in a cool, dry place. Replace the plastic lid of the formula tin after opening and use the contents within four weeks.
- When travelling, carry cooled, boiled water and formula powder separately. Mix when needed.

## Bottle feeding a formula fed baby

- Ask your midwife or nurse to show you how to give a bottle feed.
- Offer baby a bottle feed whenever they seem hungry.
- Hold baby in a semi-upright position. Make eye contact and talk to baby during the feed.
- It may help baby's development if you alternate which side of your body you hold baby.
- Touch the bottle teat on baby's top lip and wait for baby to open their mouth.
- Your baby may find it difficult to control the flow of the bottle. Pace the bottle feed, remove the bottle a few times during the feed, hold baby upright and to allow baby to burp if needed. Watch baby during the feed and remove the bottle if baby seems distressed.
- Throw out any milk left in the bottle from a feed within one hour.

## Giving formula feeds to a baby who is mixed feeding (also breastfeeding)

- If you are giving expressed breast milk and/or formula to a baby that is also breastfeeding it is important to ensure baby takes as much milk at the breast as possible.
- Discuss this with your lactation consultant, midwife, or nurse.
- They may advise you offer both breasts at every feed and putting baby back to the breast after giving a bottle. They may discuss how to increase your breastmilk supply.
- Ask for the brochures: *Increasing your breastmilk supply*, *Supplementary feeds for healthy full term babies*.

## Signs that baby is feeding well

- Your baby is generally content, settles after most feeds and has good colour and skin tone.
- Six to eight pale, wet, cloth nappies or five to six heavy, wet disposable nappies every 24 hours. Regular soft bowel motions.
- Weight gain.

### Resources

- Your Midwife, Child and Family Health Nurse, or Lactation Consultant
- Australian Breastfeeding Association [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au) Helpline: 1800 686 268.
- Raising Children Network [www.Raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.Raisingchildren.net.au)
- Australian Infant Feeding Guidelines (2012) [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)
- If you need an interpreter, please call Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450

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