

GET UP & GROW

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD



Infant formula



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing



If breastfeeding is not possible, or has ceased before a baby reaches 12 months of age, infant formula is the only safe alternative for babies.

There are many kinds of infant formula available on the market. Select an age-appropriate formula, and always prepare it safely in a clean environment, following the manufacturer's directions.

If a baby is not breastfeeding, infant formula should be the only food consumed until solids are introduced at around six months of age. Milk-feeding (either breastfeeding or formula) should continue while solids are being introduced, and until 12 months of age.

Preparing infant formula

Always wash your hands and make sure you have a clean space to work before preparing any formula. Boil fresh water and allow it to cool to room temperature. Pour the required amount into a sterilised bottle, and use the scoop provided to add the correct amount of formula powder to the water.

Follow the instructions provided on the formula, and don't add anything extra. Adding infant cereal or other ingredients to formula can disrupt your baby's feeding.

It is recommended that formula be prepared just before a baby's feed – but extra formula can be stored in the refrigerator if necessary for up to 24 hours. Do not keep made-up infant formula for longer than 24 hours.

To reduce the risk of burning your baby, always warm bottles in a water bath and not in the microwave. Also, always check the temperature of the formula before offering a bottle to your baby, by pouring a few drops onto the inside of your wrist. The milk should feel warm, not hot.

'It is recommended that formula be prepared just before a baby's feed...'

Feeding your baby

Babies must be supervised while they are feeding. Do not leave your baby unattended with a bottle, and never prop up a bottle for your baby. Propping up a bottle places your baby at risk of choking or developing an ear infection.

Throw away any formula that is left in the bottle after your baby has finished feeding. It is not safe to keep or reuse this.

After use, all bottles and teats should be rinsed in cold water and then washed and sterilised before being used again.

A note about cow's milk

Cow's milk should not be given as a main drink to infants before 12 months of age. It can be used in small amounts in other foods from around six months. Reduced-fat milks are not recommended for children under the age of two years.

Sterilising bottles and teats

It is important to sterilise bottles and teats to kill any harmful bacteria. Wash bottles and teats in warm soapy water, and rinse off any detergent or bubbles. Ask your health nurse or early childhood setting for more information if you are unsure about which method to choose, and always follow the directions carefully.

Infant formula for settings

When you take your baby to an early childhood setting, you will also need to take some formula. Make sure that you explain your baby's normal feeding routine to early childhood staff or carers.

Each day, provide the setting with clean bottles and teats, and in a separate container, enough pre-measured powdered formula for each feed. Label everything with the date, your child's name and the amount of water with which the formula is to be mixed.

Some settings may prefer you to provide the water as well. If so, fill each bottle with the correct amount of pre-boiled cooled water. Keep the correct amount of powdered formula needed for each bottle separate, and label with your child's name and the date.

It is not safe to prepare infant formula at home and transport it to the setting, as bacteria can grow in pre-made formula.





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For more information

Raising Children Network
www.raisingchildren.net.au

www.health.gov.au

All information in this publication is correct as at April 2013