

INFANT FORMULA: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



USING THIS BOOKLET

Families may feed formula for medical or personal reasons, exclusively or as a supplement. This resource will help parents, families, caregivers, and childcare providers prepare, feed, and store formula safely. The information is meant for healthy, term babies. This booklet includes information about the risks and costs of formula feeding to help you make an informed decision.

This booklet will guide you to:

- Make an informed decision.
- Prepare three types of formula safely.
- Feed your baby according to your baby's feeding cues.
- Store and transport formula safely.

In this booklet, the word “formula” is used. Other names for formula are:

- Artificial baby milk.
- Human milk substitutes.
- Commercial or store-bought infant formula.
- Manufactured infant milk.
- Manufactured mother's milk.
- Baby formula.

Note for providers: *This booklet is intended for individual discussion and is not intended to be on display or given out in group situations.*

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CONSIDERING FORMULA FEEDING

The World Health Organization, Health Canada, Dietitians of Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society, and the B.C. Ministry of Health recommend that babies be fed only breast milk for the first six months. After six months of age continue to give breast milk along with solid foods for up to two years of age and longer.

Parents may give their baby infant formula for a variety of reasons. Parents may feed their baby formula only, or give some formula and some breast milk. Giving formula may not be their first choice. If you need to supplement your breastfed baby, see page 4.

Parents may feel uncomfortable or guilty about giving their baby formula. If you feel this way, it may be helpful to talk with a health care provider. Feeding your baby safely, when they are hungry and stopping when they are full, is most important. This will help you build a close and loving bond with your baby, whether you give breast milk, formula, or both.

If you use infant formula to feed your baby, it is important to have the information you need to feel comfortable with your plan. If you are hoping to return to breastfeeding, contact your health care provider or a lactation consultant to help put in place plans and supports to achieve your feeding goals.



If you are thinking about giving your baby formula the following information can help you make an informed decision.

Effect on Health

- Giving formula to a breastfed baby can reduce a mother's breast milk supply and impact her plan to breastfeed. Most mothers find it difficult to return to breastfeeding once they switch to infant formula.
- Babies who are not breastfed have a higher risk of ear infections, lung and breathing issues, diarrhea, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Later in life there may be increased health risks such as overweight, obesity, and chronic illnesses like diabetes.
- Mothers who do not breastfeed have a higher risk of postpartum hemorrhage (bleeding too much), type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis (weak bones), and breast, endometrial, and ovarian cancer.



In the early days after introducing formula, mothers may experience full and painful breasts. There are many comfort measures you can discuss with your health care provider, including cold compresses, gentle hand expression and the use of anti-inflammatory pain medications.

Financial Cost

The table shows the average cost of feeding a baby with basic formula for one year. This does not include the cost of bottles, nipples, other feeding equipment, or the cost of preparing and storing formula.

Type of formula	Cost per year
Ready To Feed	\$3,360 per year
Liquid Concentrate	\$1,100 per year
Powder	\$900 per year

This is an approximate cost of formula from birth to one year. The cost will be different with time and will depend on where you live. Numbers are based on estimates in three parts of Ontario, in 2014 and 2015.

Quality & Safety of Formula

All commercial infant formulas must undergo a safety inspection and nutritional analysis by Health Canada. The *Healthy Canadians* website lists safety concerns and recall alerts for all foods and beverages. To view this website and sign up for alerts, go to: <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/index-eng.php>.

Keep in mind that powdered formula is not a sterile product and so it's important to closely follow the instructions for safe preparation and storage.

If you feed your baby formula, this booklet provides the information you need to prepare, store and transport formula, and to feed your baby safely.

Please review this booklet and discuss any concerns with your health care provider, nurse, public health nurse, lactation consultant, registered dietitian, or call HealthLink BC at **8-1-1**.

SUPPLEMENTING A BREASTFED BABY

If you need to supplement your baby, the best option is your own breast milk. This can be expressed by hand and/or by pump. Giving formula to a breastfed baby can decrease your breast milk supply. Supplementing with formula may lead to ending breastfeeding before you had planned to stop. It can be hard to restart breastfeeding after having stopped.

Here is a list of supplements in order of what to try first if available:

1. Your own fresh breast milk, hand expressed and/or pumped.
2. Your own breast milk that has been frozen and thawed just before using.
3. Pasteurized donor human milk (breast milk) from a certified human milk bank. Some milk banks may only have enough milk for babies with special needs such as preterm babies.
4. Store-bought infant formula that is cow milk-based.

Most babies who drink formula do best with a cow milk-based formula. Specialized formulas should only be used if your health care provider recommends them.

Some parents may choose to use a bottle to give a supplement, but this is not always the best method of feeding a supplement to a breastfed baby. Babies who are fed by bottle may find it harder to breastfeed.

You can feed your baby a supplement using one or more of the following methods. With the help of a knowledgeable professional consider a:

- Cup (open cup, not sippy cup) or spoon.
- Lactation aid which uses a tube at your breast.
- Finger feeder with a tube attached to your clean finger.
- More specialized feeding devices.



Feeding with open cup

If you are thinking about using formula, or need to give formula:

- Consider giving your baby as much breast milk as you are able.
- Consider getting support to maintain your breast milk supply so you are able to offer some breast milk to your baby.

Resources to support breastfeeding:

- All About Supplementing: www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/all-about-supplementing
- Breastfeeding Challenges: www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/topic/breastfeeding-challenges
- La Leche League at: www.lllc.ca
- Your local Public Health Unit at: www.healthlinkbc.ca/services-and-resources/find-services
- Find a lactation consultant in your area at: www.bclca.ca/Find-a-BCLCA-Lactation-Consultant
- Call HealthLinkBC at **8-1-1** to speak with a registered dietitian or nurse, or [email a HealthLinkBC dietitian](#) if you need more information. You can also talk to your public health nurse or health care provider if you have questions, need extra support, or would like to talk about your infant feeding options.

This booklet has information on bottle-feeding supplies on page 8, and how to bottle feed on page 19.

HOW TO CHOOSE FORMULA

Recommendations for choosing formula:

- Cow milk-based formula is recommended for most babies who get formula. Most formulas have a cow milk-base with added nutrients.
- Soy-based formulas are not recommended except for babies with a particular medical condition. Sometimes parents decide to use soy for personal, cultural, or religious reasons.
- **Do not use homemade formulas** and do not use regular cow milk or other animal milks. These do not have the right amount of nutrients and may be harmful to your baby.
- Follow the directions on the container for the amounts of water and formula. Adding extra water to formula to make it thinner, or less water to make it thicker, can be unhealthy and dangerous for your baby.
- Formulas sold as organic, made with prebiotics, probiotics, added DHA fats, or made with “partially broken down” proteins are NOT needed. Research has not proven these to be helpful.
- Formula fed babies need to stay on store-bought formula until 9 months of age. “Follow-up” formula is NOT needed after this time. However, it is recommended for some cow milk allergic babies to be fed soy formula as a beverage up to two years of age.

There are three types of formulas:

- Ready-to-feed – no water needed.
- Liquid concentrate – needs to be mixed with boiled water.
- Powdered – needs to be mixed with boiled water.

Ready-to-feed and liquid concentrate formulas are sterile until the can is opened. Powdered formula is not sterile and may carry harmful bacteria that can make your baby sick if not prepared safely.



You can use any store bought formula if your baby is healthy and born at full term (37 weeks or more of pregnancy) and you have access to a clean, reliable water supply.

Use only ready-to-feed formula if you do not have access to a safe, clean, and reliable water supply.

Babies who have the greatest risk of infection from powdered infant formula should have sterile liquid formula such as ready-to-feed or liquid concentrate formulas.

Babies who are at the greatest risk of infections from powdered infant formula are those who:

- Are premature (born before 37 weeks of pregnancy).
- Had low birth weight and are under two months of age.
- Have a weakened immune system meaning they are more likely to get sick if exposed to germs.

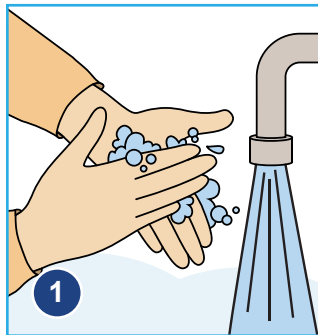
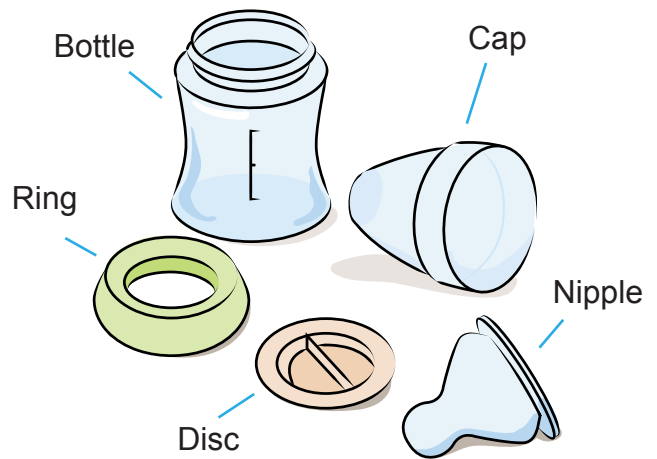
If you are unsure if your baby has a greater risk of infection, talk to your health care provider.

Read the following pages for details on how to prepare and feed formula.

CLEANING BOTTLES AND EQUIPMENT

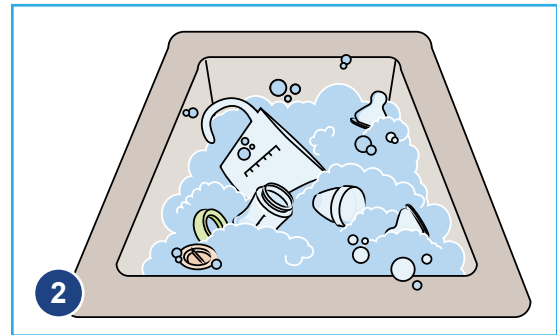
Always pre-clean all bottle and feeding equipment for babies of any age who are being fed formula. This will remove unseen bits of formula or specks of dirt before disinfection.

Use glass bottles or Bisphenol-A (BPA)-free plastic bottles. Make sure all parts have no cracks, are not discoloured and have no loose parts that could break off.



Wash your hands with soap and warm water. Wash your sink and work area with a clean dishcloth, soap and warm water. Then, it is a good idea to sanitize the counter by mixing 5 mL (1 teaspoon)

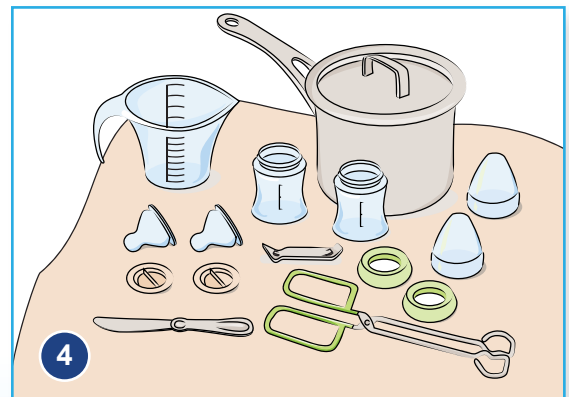
household bleach with 750 mL (3 cups) of water. Put this solution in a spray bottle and label the bottle. Spray your counter and wipe it with a clean towel.



Wash all bottles, nipples, rings, caps, discs, measuring cup, can opener if needed, mixing utensils, and tongs in hot soapy water. If needed also wash containers for storing boiled water.



Use a bottle brush that is used only for infant feeding equipment. Scrub inside the bottles and nipples to make sure they are free of any sign of formula.



Rinse well in hot water. Set the bottles and feeding equipment on a clean towel, on a clean surface. Now you are ready to disinfect this equipment.

DISINFECTING BOTTLES AND EQUIPMENT

Disinfect all bottles, feeding equipment, and water for formula for babies of any age. There is no research that says when to safely stop disinfecting. That means it is safest to disinfect water and bottle feeding supplies as long as your baby is drinking formula to kill any germs that could make your baby sick.

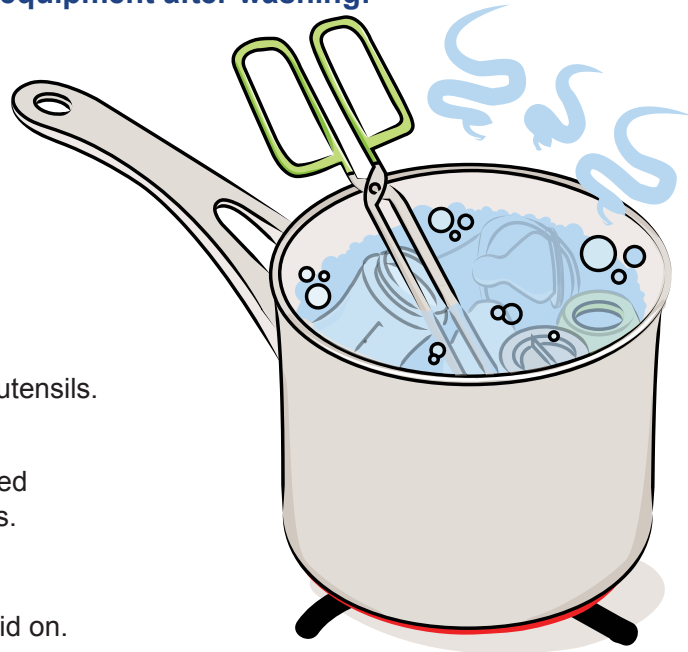
To disinfect the bottles and feeding equipment after washing:

1 Fill a large pot with clean water. Add:

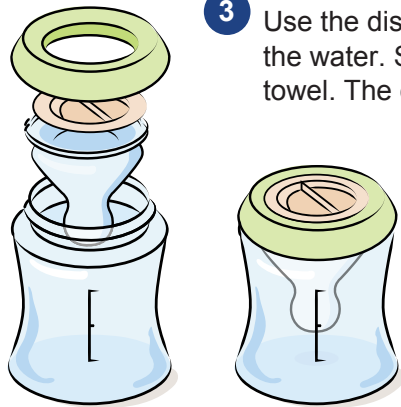
- Bottles.
- Nipples.
- Rings.
- Caps.
- Discs.
- Measuring cup and knife.
- Can opener (if needed), and mixing utensils.
- Tongs with handle sticking out.

Make sure all your equipment is covered with water and there are no air bubbles.

2 Bring the water in the pot to a boil. Let it boil for two minutes, without the lid on.



3 Use the disinfected tongs to remove the bottles and feeding equipment from the water. Shake excess water off. Set the equipment to air dry on a clean towel. The equipment is now ready to use.



4 If the items are not used right away, let them dry, and store them in a clean place. They could be kept on a clean and dry towel on the counter with another clean towel over them. They could be stored in a new plastic bag. Do not touch the inside of equipment where formula will have contact. Fit nipples, caps, and rings together. Put the nipple on the inside of the bottle to keep it clean until you are ready to use it.

It is safe to use **home disinfectors or sterilizers** that you can buy in the store. This includes microwave sterilizers. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to make sure the plastics and metals will be safe. **A pot on the stove also works well. Dishwashers are not recommended to disinfect bottles and formula equipment.**

If you are using a **disposable bottle system**, wash all the non-disposable parts like nipples and caps and then disinfect them. New liners are clean and ready to use for one-time use only.

Automatic formula preparation machines for use at home are not considered a safe way to prepare infant formula. When the water is heated, it may not be hot enough to kill the bacteria that may be present in powdered infant formula. The safest way to make powdered formula is to use boiled water cooled to 70°C. Also, there is the risk that the powdered formula dispensed by the machine will not be the correct amount.

CHOOSING AND DISINFECTING WATER TO MAKE FORMULA

When mixing concentrated liquid or powdered formulas, the following types of water sources can be used after you disinfect the water (see page 10):

- Tap water from a community water supply
- Tap water from your own well that has been tested regularly
- Bottled water (seal not broken)

Tap Water

Choose a reliable community drinking water supply system that has been tested safe for total coliform bacteria, E. coli, nitrate and other chemicals (your community or municipal water supplier should already do this).

All private water sources (wells or surface water) should be tested regularly for bacteria and chemical quality to ensure it is suitable for drinking. For more information on well water testing, see HealthLinkBC File #05b Well Water Testing: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/hfile/05b>.

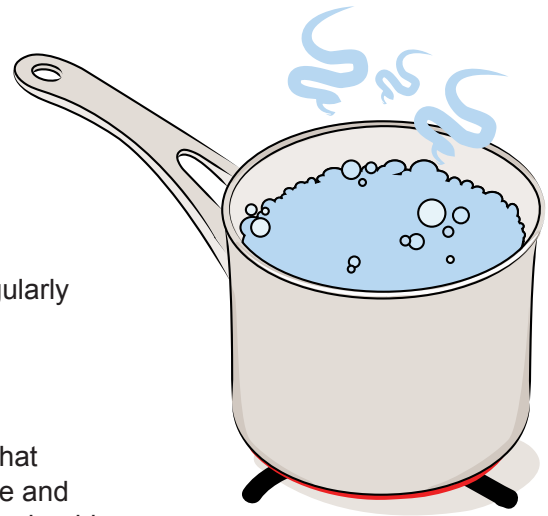
If you get your water tested and are unsure how to read the results, please call the environmental health officer at your local health authority. Your local environmental health officer may also be able to give you a list of labs in B.C. that test drinking water, or can be found on the internet under Laboratories – Analytical.

Bottled Water

If you do not have access to a safe water source, use ready-to-feed liquid formula or bottled water. Choose bottled water that has an unopened seal.

Do NOT use these water sources for formula:

- Water known to contain high levels of nitrate, fluoride, sodium, lead (see page 9), or Blue-Green Algae (Cyanobacteria). Boiling will not get rid of these chemicals, and may actually concentrate them in the water.
- Carbonated water: Carbonation and added flavours are not appropriate for babies. Carbonated water may also have added salt.
- Tap water from an older home that has not been tested for lead.
- Specialty nursery or baby waters.



CHOOSING WATER TO MAKE FORMULA (CONTINUED)

Disinfecting Water

- Disinfect all water used for formula for babies of any age.
- There is no research that says when to safely stop boiling water to disinfect it. It is safest to disinfect water and disinfect bottle feeding supplies as long as your baby is using formula.
- Home water treatment and filter equipment does not replace the need to disinfect water for babies.

Preparing for Emergencies

Tap water can sometimes become contaminated and may NOT be safe to use. In such cases your water supplier will issue a water quality advisory, a boil water notice, or a do not use notice. If this happens, follow the advice from your water supplier and/or local health authority. Be ready for an event like a long power outage by having enough ready-to-feed formula for 72 hours.

Special Note: Lead in Water

- If you live in a building with older plumbing (pre-1990), water should be tested for lead. Water supplies that have lower pH and are corrosive further increase risk of lead from plumbing getting into water. Lead levels in water should be below 0.005 mg/L.
- If water has been sitting in pipes for several hours, let the water run for a few minutes, or until the temperature drops. This will often flush out lead that has accumulated in pipes. Replacing leaded plumbing or using special lead filters will also reduce lead in water.
- **Boiling water with high levels of lead will increase the concentration of lead even more.**
- To learn more about lead pipes, or a filter for houses with lead pipes, look here: www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/hw119507.
- To have your water tested for lead, contact a qualified lab in your area, which can be found at www.nrs.gov.bc.ca/qualified-labs.

Manganese

- Formula, reconstituted with tap water, can be a source of exposure to manganese for bottle-fed infants. In areas where the level of manganese in drinking water is above the Health Canada guideline (0.12 mg/L), it is recommended that an alternate source of water (e.g. bottled water) be used to prepare infant formula (see page 10). If you are on your own water source (i.e. a private well) you should test your drinking water.
- As a precaution, you may wish to avoid using discoloured water for drinking or to prepare food or infant formula until its safety can be confirmed. If you have concerns about your water or health, contact your drinking water supplier or local public health authority. See www.healthlinkbc.ca or call 811 for information on how to tell if manganese might be present in your water.

HOW TO DISINFECT WATER, CHOOSE FORMULA AND BOTTLE-FEEDING SUPPLIES

Boil all water used for formula for babies of any age.

There is no research that says when to safely stop disinfecting. That means it is safest to boil water and disinfect bottle feeding supplies as long as your baby is using formula. Choose a reliable water source that is intended for drinking water, and that has been tested safe for coliform bacteria, lead, and nitrate levels. If there is no safe drinking water source, use bottled water and boil it.

To prepare water for formula:

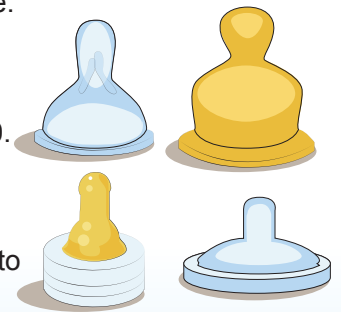
- If using tap water, use water from the cold water tap, as water from the hot water tap may contain increased levels of metals such as lead.
- Bring water to a rolling boil in a pot, on the stove. Continue to **boil for two minutes**. Do not use kettles that shut off before the water has boiled for two minutes.
- **If you are using liquid concentrate formula:**
 - Boil water for two minutes and cool it before mixing it with formula.
 - Water may also be boiled for two minutes and then stored. Boiled water may be kept in a disinfected, tightly closed container for 24 hours at room temperature or for 2–3 days in the fridge. Feed your baby formula that is close to body temperature.
- **If you are using powdered formula:**
 - Bring your water to a rolling boil for two minutes. Then mix it with formula when the water is cooled to no less than 70°C (1 litre of water cools to about 70°C after about 30 minutes, but it is different for different types of pots and amounts of water). When water is less than 70°C it is not hot enough to kill harmful bacteria in the formula. Cool the mixed formula quickly to body temperature before feeding your baby.
 - For healthy, full term babies at low risk of infection (see pages 5 and 13), you can mix powdered formula with water that was previously boiled, cooled, and stored in a disinfected, tightly closed container as above. **This must be fed to your baby right away.**

Selecting formula cans:

- Make sure that the formula container is not dented or bulging because these are signs that the formula may have gone bad.
- Check the expiry date on the can. Do not use formula after the expiry date.

Selecting bottle-feeding supplies:

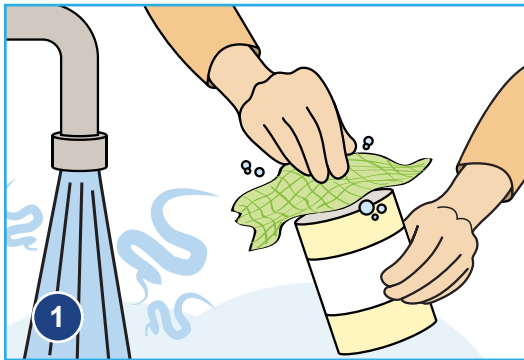
- Watch your baby and use a nipple that helps your baby feed in a stress-free, relaxed way. For more on feeding cues and stress cues see page 20.
- Bottle nipples can be different shapes and sizes.
- The flow rate of a nipple is how fast the milk or formula comes out. The flow rate plus the size of the nipple hole may be different from one nipple to another, even for nipples in the same package.
- Different nipples work better at different times. Buy one package and watch that your baby is relaxed while feeding. If your baby is having problems, try a different type.
- Bottle nipples can be made of various materials.
- Check bottle nipples often. Replace them when they are cracked, sticky, torn, discoloured or if the hole gets larger and the formula drips out quickly.



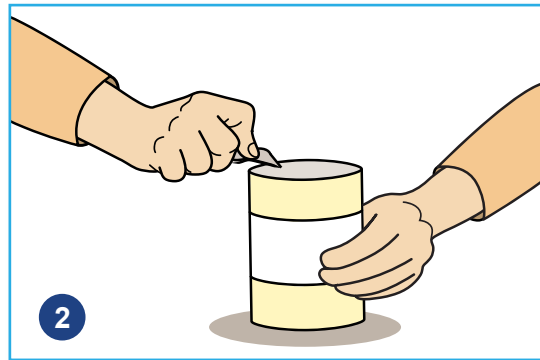
PREPARING READY-TO-FEED LIQUID FORMULA

Ready-to-feed liquid formula is the *safest* formula for premature infants, low birth weight infants, babies who are ill, or babies whose immune system may be weak. This type of formula is sterile.

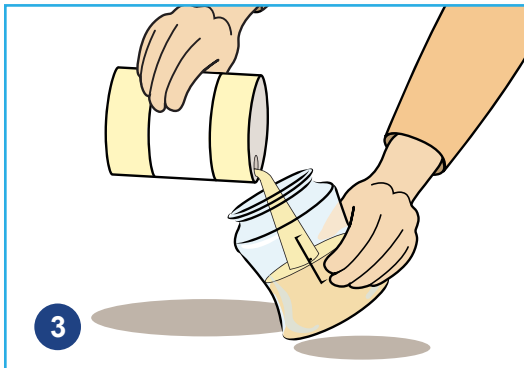
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water, and disinfect the counter area according to the directions on page 6.
- Have all your disinfected supplies ready (see pages 6 and 7).



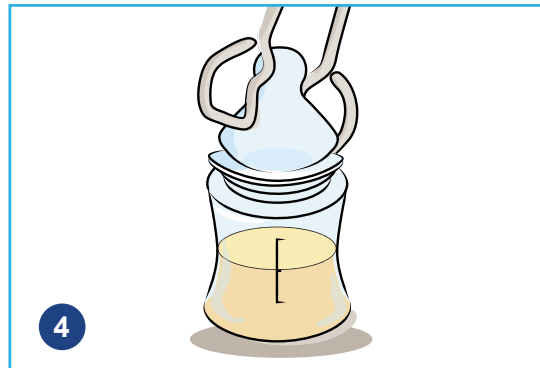
Wash the top of the can with hot water and soap, using a clean dishcloth.



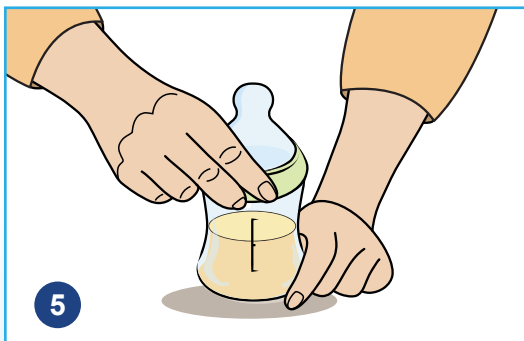
Shake the can or bottle well and open with a disinfected can opener if needed.



Pour the formula directly into clean and disinfected bottles. **Do not add water.**



Use disinfected tongs to pick up nipples, caps and rings and put these on the bottles



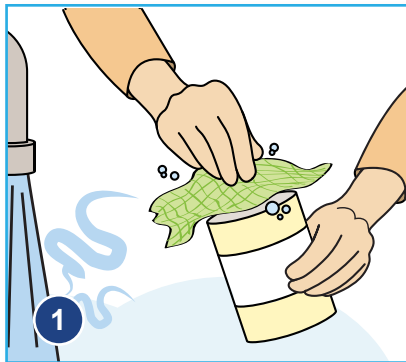
Tighten the ring with your hands. Be careful not to touch the nipple.

See pages 18–21 for guidelines on how and when to feed your baby.

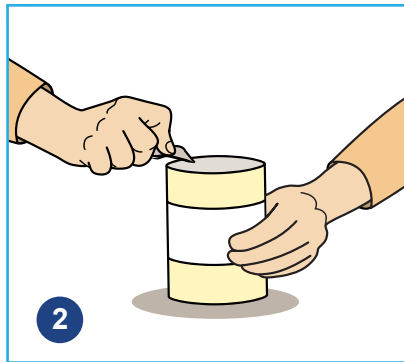
PREPARING CONCENTRATED LIQUID FORMULA

Concentrated liquid formula is sterile. Concentrated liquid formula mixed with boiled drinking water according to directions (page 10), is the next recommended type of formula to feed your baby.

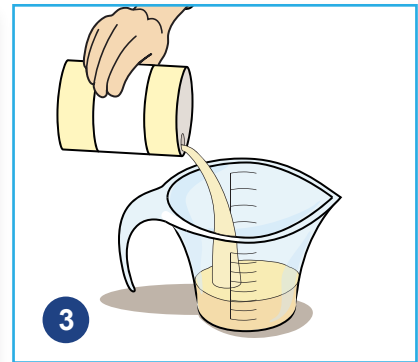
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water, and disinfect the counter areas according to the directions on page 6.
- Have all your disinfected supplies ready (see pages 6 and 7).



1 Wash the top of the can with hot water and soap, using a clean dishcloth.



2 Shake the can well and open with a disinfected can opener if needed.



3 Measure the formula in a disinfected measuring cup. Read the label to see how much formula and boiled water to use.



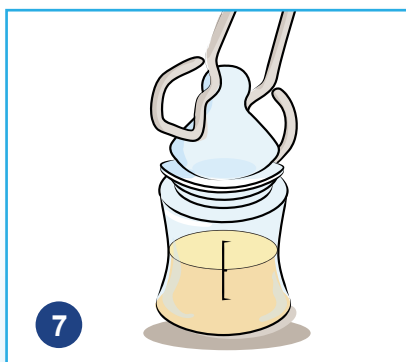
4 Add boiled water which has been cooled down to room temperature.



5 Mix gently with a disinfected utensil.



6 Pour the formula into disinfected bottles.



7 Use disinfected tongs to pick up nipples, rings and bottle caps.



8 Tighten the ring with your hands. Be careful not to touch the nipple.

See pages 18–21 for guidelines on how and when to feed your baby.

PREPARING POWDERED FORMULA

Powdered formula is not sterile and has made some babies sick. It is important to prepare powdered formula correctly to lower the risk of your baby getting sick. The cost of liquid concentrate, which is a sterile product, bought by the case, and the cost of powdered formula are very similar once mixed (see page 3).

Babies who have the greatest chance of infections should have sterile liquid formula such as ready-to-feed. Babies at greatest risk of infections from powdered infant formula are those who:

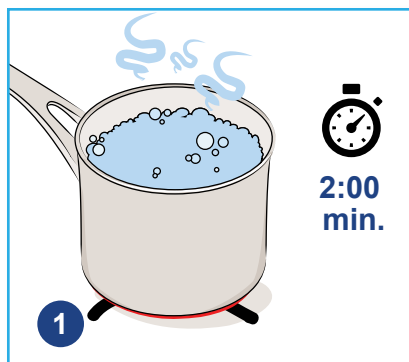
- Are premature.
- Had low birth weight and are under two months of age.
- Have a weakened immune system.

If you are not sure about feeding your baby powdered formula, check with your health care provider.

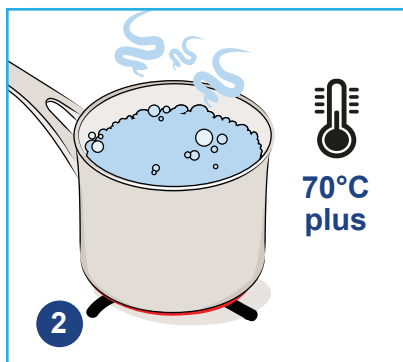
Directions:

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water, and disinfect the counter area according to the directions on page 6.
- Have all your disinfected supplies ready (see pages 6 and 7).

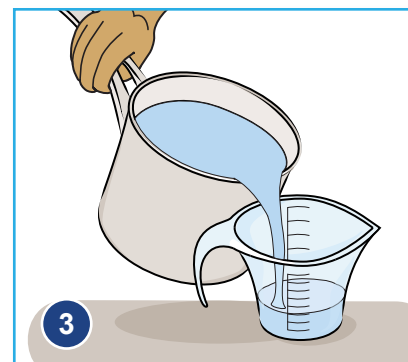
Use boiled and cooled water to make powdered formula. It is best to make the formula fresh and use it right away after it has cooled.



Boil the water for two minutes.

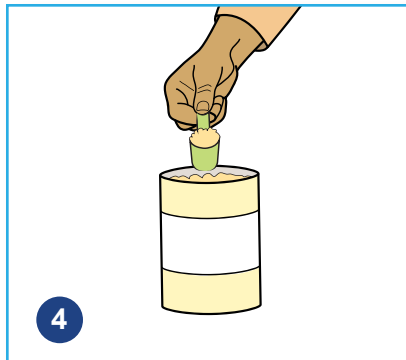


Make the formula when the water has cooled to no less than 70°C. **The temperature must be over 70°C to kill harmful bacteria that may be in the powder.** If the boiled water has been sitting at room temperature for more than 30 minutes, you will need to reheat it to 70° C or slightly more before mixing it with formula.

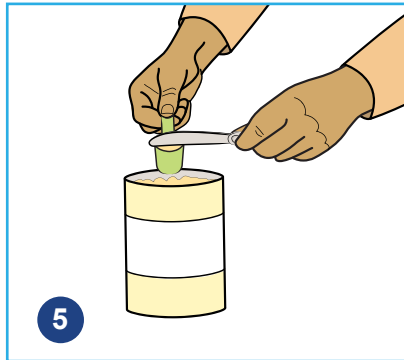


Read the formula label. It will tell you how much formula and water to use. Pour the needed amount of boiled water into a disinfected measuring cup.

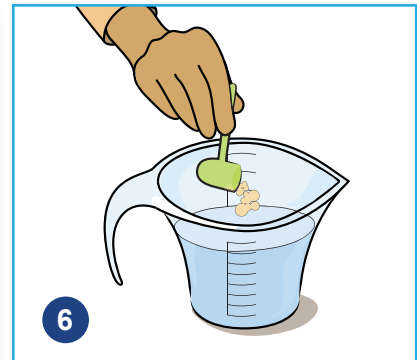
PREPARING POWDERED FORMULA (CONTINUED)



4 Measure the needed amount of powdered formula. Use the scoop from inside the can.



5 Do not pack the powder down into the scoop. Level the scoop with the flat side of a disinfected knife.



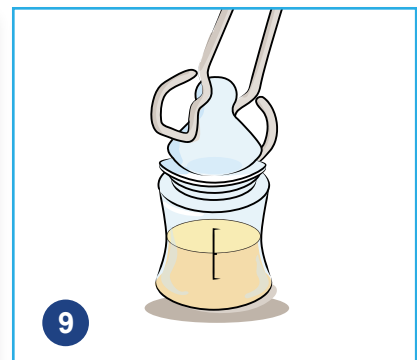
6 Mix powder with water that was boiled and cooled to no less than 70°C.



7 Mix with a disinfected utensil until no lumps of powder are left.



8 Pour the amount of formula for one feeding into a disinfected bottle.



9 Use disinfected tongs to pick up nipples, rings and caps, and put on bottles.

For babies not at greater risk for infection from powdered formula (see top of page 13), you can mix powdered formula with water that was boiled and cooled to no less than 70°C. This must be fed to your baby right away.

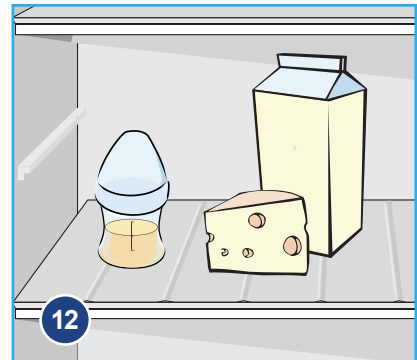
PREPARING POWDERED FORMULA (CONTINUED)



Tighten the ring with your hands. Be careful not to touch the nipple.



Quickly cool the bottle of formula under cold, running water or in a container of cold water. When it is at body or room temperature, feed your baby.



It is better to mix this type of formula fresh for each feed. If this is not possible, put the prepared formula in the fridge. Use it within 24 hours. See pages 18–21 for guidelines on how and when to feed your baby.

For babies not at greater risk for infection from powdered formula (see top of page 13), you can mix powdered formula with water that was previously boiled and cooled. This must be fed to your baby right away.

The safest way to prepare powdered infant formula for immediate or later use is to use boiled water cooled to 70°C for all infants. For healthy, full term babies, Health Canada suggests that previously boiled water, cooled to room or body temperature, can be used if the formula is offered right away.

SAFELY STORING FORMULA

- It is best to use formula immediately after preparing it.
- Throw out any formula left in a bottle or cup for more than two hours after feeding begins.

Ready-to-feed and Concentrated Liquid:

– Stored in Containers:

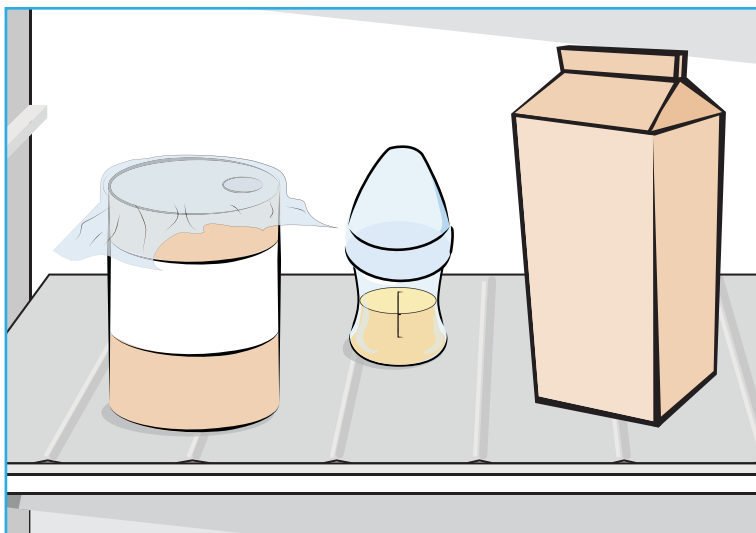
- Cover cans with a plastic cap or plastic wrap.
- Keep opened cans of concentrated and ready-to-use formula in the fridge.
- Throw cans out after 48 hours or follow what the label on the can tells you.

– Stored in Bottles:

- Keep bottles with prepared formula in the fridge for 24 hours at the most.
- Throw out prepared formula after 24 hours.
- Store bottles near the back of the fridge where it stays cooler.

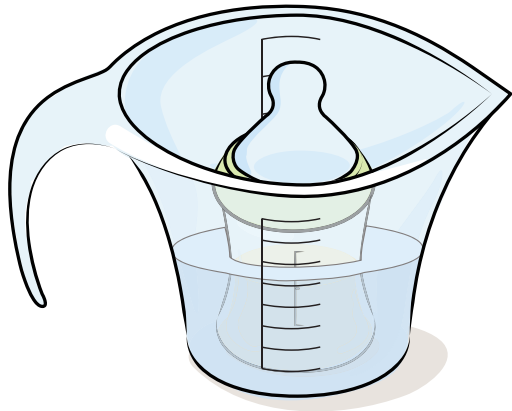
Powdered Formula:

- Keep bottles with prepared formula in the fridge for 24 hours at the most.
- Store open cans of powder with the lid tightly closed, in a cool, dry place (not in the fridge).
- After a can is open, use the rest of the powdered formula within one month, and before the expiry date.



Never freeze formula to use later as this can change the texture and nutrition levels.

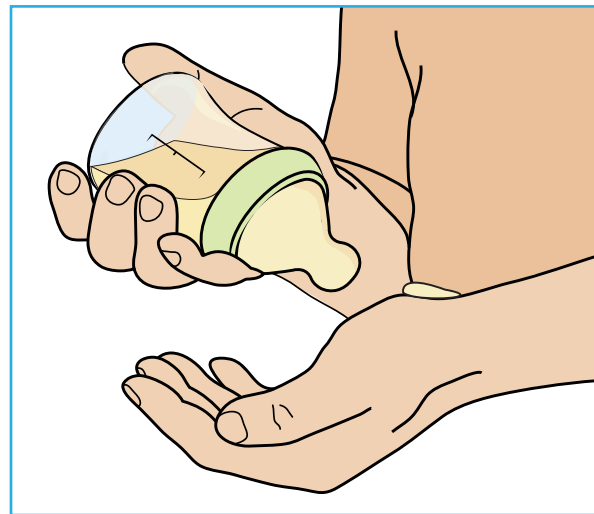
WARMING FORMULA TO FEED



Warming

- Remove the formula from the fridge just before you need to feed your baby.
- Many babies prefer formula at body temperature (warm), and others like it cool. Either way is fine. Your baby will let you know what he prefers.
- Warm the bottle of formula in a container of warm water, or a bottle warmer. Keep the nipple area out of the water.
- **Do not heat any bottles in the microwave.** This heats the formula unevenly and creates “hot spots” that could burn your baby’s mouth.
- Warm the bottle for no more than 15 minutes. Shake the bottle a few times during warming.

- Check to make sure the formula is not too hot before the feeding. If the formula is too hot, cool it by putting the bottle under cold running water, or in a bowl filled with cold water and ice. Shake the bottle 1 to 2 times and put a few drops of formula on the inside of your wrist. It should feel slightly warm, not hot.
- Once you have warmed the formula, feed your baby right away.
- **Do not reheat formula during a feed or refrigerate a partly used bottle.**
- **A bottle should be used within two hours of heating, or as it tells you on the can label.**
- **Throw out any leftover formula.**



WHEN TO FEED YOUR BABY

In the first few months of life, most babies eat at least eight times in 24 hours. This does not mean they feed every three hours. They will feed when they are hungry. They will feed during the night, and it is normal to feed during the night for many months. Older babies may need to eat less often. It is important to follow and respect what your baby is telling you. These are your baby's cues. Follow your baby's behavior.

Have your baby in your room with you whether in hospital or at home. It is recommended that your baby sleeps in your room on her own sleep surface for six months. This is best because it can:

- Help you notice when your baby is hungry.
- Help you calm your baby if he or she is unsettled.
- Help lower the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, also known as SIDS.

Your baby will tell you when he is hungry. It is important to understand these cues. It is best to feed when your baby is showing early feeding cues.

Feed your baby when you see early signs of hunger such as:

- Stirring, moving arms.
- Rapid eye movements under the eyelids.
- Mouth opening, yawning, lip smacking.
- Turning her head towards you or something that is touching her cheek, with her mouth open (rooting).

This is a good time to feed your baby.

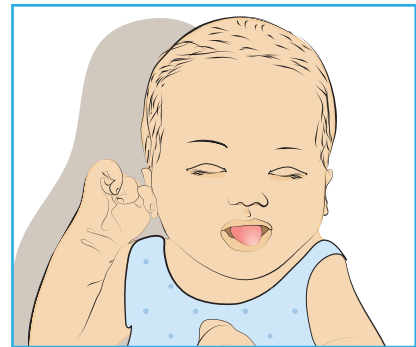
Your baby is much hungrier when you see:

- Hands going to her mouth.
- Sucking or licking movements.
- Restlessness.
- Soft cooing or sighing sounds, getting louder.

Late feeding cues showing your baby is extremely hungry include:

- Fussing.
- Crying.
- Being agitated.
- Exhaustion.
- Falling asleep.

If your baby is showing late feeding cues, you may have to calm her down or let her sleep briefly before feeding. One great way to calm your baby is holding her skin-to-skin against your chest.



Early Feeding Cues: Mouth opening, yawning, lip smacking.



Moderate Feeding Cues: Restlessness, sighing, sounds getting louder.



Late Feeding Cues: Fussing, crying, agitated.

HOW TO BOTTLE FEED YOUR BABY



- Cuddle or hold your baby close when feeding. Make feeding a special time.
 - Hold your baby in an upright position, so that her head is much higher than her body, keeping the head supported.
 - Put the bottle nipple just below the lower lip and wait for an “invitation” to put the bottle in. The invitation is your baby responding to this touch with a big, wide-open mouth. Ensure much of the nipple is in the baby’s mouth so that during feeding, your baby has a wide open mouth on a large part of the nipple. Avoid just pushing the nipple of the bottle into your baby’s mouth.
 - Tilt the bottle only a little, keeping it almost flat, so that it is easier for your baby to manage the flow of the formula. Some air in the nipple will not cause a problem for your baby.
- Do not prop a bottle or put your baby to bed with a bottle. Your baby may drink too much or too little and it can also cause choking, tooth decay (cavities), and ear infections. **It is important for babies to be held and touched during feeding.**
 - Hold your baby in one arm for some feeds and in another arm for others. This helps your baby with muscle development while he is turning his head to look at you.
 - Feeding is a special time. Enjoy your baby, talk to her, smile, sing, cuddle.

Skin-to-Skin

Hold your newborn baby skin-to-skin every day. Continue to hold your baby skin-to-skin often during the first few months. Skin-to-skin contact is best done while awake. For more information on safer infant sleep see: www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2017/safer-sleep-for-my-baby.pdf.

Research shows that spending lots of time skin-to-skin can:

- Help your baby feel safe and secure.
- Keep your baby warm.
- Stabilize your baby’s heart rate, breathing and blood sugar after she is born.
- Keep your baby calm and decrease crying.
- Help you to recognize when your baby is hungry.
- Help mothers, family members and babies learn to respond better to each other.
- Help babies learn to socialize better.
- Help brain development.
- Decrease postpartum depression for mothers.



Partners and other caregivers in the family can also enjoy skin-to-skin time with their babies.

Practice during feeding time, bath time, when your baby is fussy, or any time. See: http://library.stfx.ca/abigelow/skin_to_skin/skin_to_skin_parents.mp4.

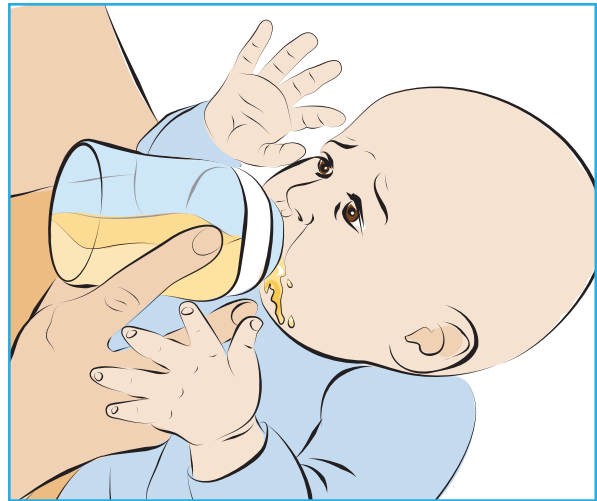
FEED ACCORDING TO YOUR BABY'S CUES

Offer the bottle in response to feeding cues so that the feeding is comfortable for your baby. Your baby should look relaxed while feeding. Watch for a calm face and relaxed hands and arms, especially after the feeding starts. Do not rush the feeding. Take your time and do not force your baby to feed more than he wants, this will help reduce the risk of overfeeding.

It is important to watch your baby's cues. Watch for signs of discomfort or stress during feeding. Parents are encouraged to give most of the feeds themselves (particularly in the early days and weeks), this will help to build a close and loving relationship with your baby and help your baby to feel safe and secure.

Signs of stress during feeding may be:

- Milk leaking or dribbling out of his mouth.
- Choking or gagging while feeding.
- Gulping or swallowing quickly without taking a breath after each swallow.
- Breathing fast or working hard to catch a breath.
- Smacking or squeaking noises.
- Squirming or struggling during the feed.
- Pushing the bottle away with his hands or tongue or moving his head away.
- Stressed look on his forehead.



If your baby shows signs of stress during a feed, slow down the feed for a few moments or stop. **Give your baby a break** by tilting the bottle so that less milk is in the nipple, or maybe no milk is there for a short while. You can also take the bottle out of his mouth, cuddle your baby, burp your baby, and watch for signs of hunger to restart.

Restart the feed when your baby's breathing is relaxed and your baby is asking for more. Watch for feeding cues (page 18). If there are feeding cues, continue feeding. If there are no more feeding cues, end the feeding.

If your baby keeps showing signs of stress during feedings, check if your feeding supplies are right for your baby. For example, the flow of milk from the nipple you are using may be too fast. If you have trouble fixing the problem, get help from a knowledgeable professional.

Stop the feeding when your baby shows signs of fullness. These include:

- Slowing down or stopping sucking.
- Closing his mouth.
- Turning his head away.
- Pushing away from the bottle or the person feeding him.
- Falling asleep and no longer interested in feeding.

Do not pressure your baby to finish a bottle. Pay attention to your baby's feeding cues and let your baby decide how much or how little to eat. Be responsive to your baby.

Your baby may still have small sucking movements after a feed. This is normal baby behaviour.

Burping

- Try to burp your baby just for a few minutes part way through the feed and after the feed.
- Burping may bring up air that was swallowed during a feed.

Signs that your baby needs to burp are:

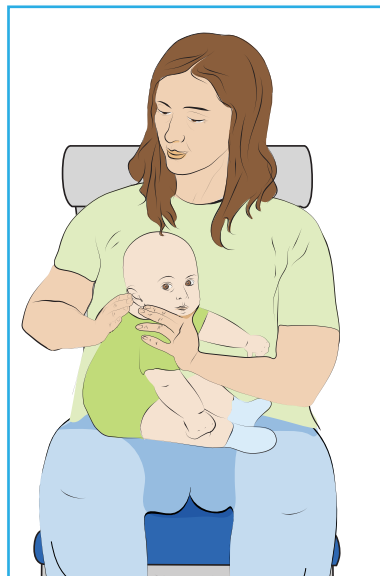
- Arching his back.
- Getting cranky or fussy.
- Pulling away from the bottle.
- Sucking slows down or stops.



Burp your baby by gently patting his back with a cupped hand. Try these positions to burp your baby:



Hold your baby upright over your shoulder.



Hold your baby in a sitting position on your lap. Your baby will be leaning slightly forward with your hand supporting his jaw.



Place your baby on his stomach across your lap.

After the feeding:

- Throw out unused formula. Never reuse, reheat or put it in the fridge to use later. Leftover formula may start to grow harmful bacteria after two hours.
- Rinse the bottle and bottle parts right after the feeding.
- Clean your baby's gums with a clean, warm, damp cloth every day.

FEEDING YOUR GROWING BABY

Feeding in the first week:

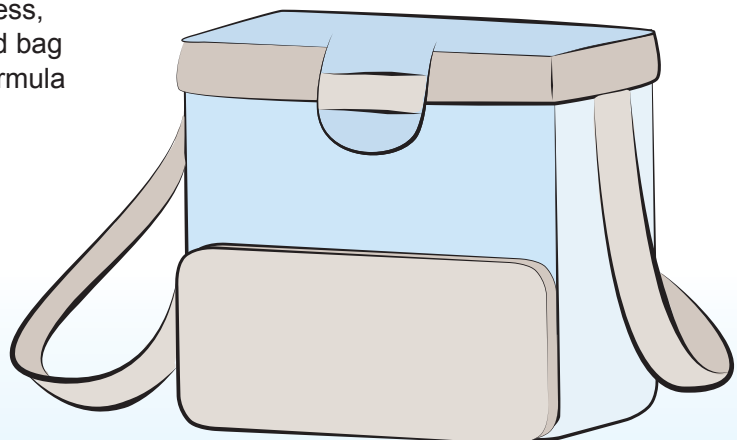
- In the first few days your baby's stomach is quite small. Your baby will need only small amounts of formula at each feeding.
- Each baby is different in how much they want to feed and how often. Feed your baby whenever she shows signs of being hungry. See page 18 for more on baby's feeding cues. With time you will better learn how to tell if your baby is hungry.
- Do not try to force your baby to finish a bottle or a certain amount. Like adults, babies are different in the amount they want at each feeding. It is better to feed small amounts and more often.
- As your baby grows during the first few weeks, she will take more at a feeding.
- Parents and caregivers may wonder if they are feeding their baby too little or too much. Respond to your baby's feeding cues.
- If you have questions or concerns about feeding your baby, talk to your health care provider.

Feeding after the first week:

- Expect your baby to feed often in the first month or so. After that, your baby may go longer between feedings and then will drink more at each feeding.
- Respond to your baby's cues, not certain amounts.
- Growth spurts are common at about three weeks, six weeks, three months and six months. Your baby may want more formula at these times or may want to feed more often.
- Babies over the age of 9 months may benefit from a vitamin D supplement depending on how much formula or cow's milk they drink and the types and amounts of foods they eat. Talk with your health care provider about your baby's vitamin D needs.
- Many health care providers use growth charts to track babies' measurements. Babies grow at different rates. Try not to compare your baby to other babies. See "Is My Child Growing Well?" at https://www.dietitians.ca/Downloads/Factsheets/DC_ChildGrowParentsE.aspx.

TRANSPORTING FORMULA

- If you plan to be away for 2 hours or less, place prepared formula in an insulated bag or cooler with an ice pack. Use this formula within 2 hours.
- If you plan to be away from home for longer than 2 hours, the best option is to bring unopened ready-to-feed formula with you.
- If there is no refrigerator available at your destination, keep the formula in the cooler bag until feeding time.
- When formula has been out of the fridge for more than 2 hours, throw it out.



TRANSPORTING FORMULA (CONTINUED)

- The bottle of formula can be put back in a fridge for up to 24 hours from the time it was prepared as long as you can answer “yes” to each of these statements:
 1. The bottle of formula has been kept cold while travelling.
 2. The bottle of formula has been out of the fridge for less than 2 hours.
 3. The baby has not taken any formula from the bottle, even only a few mouthfuls.

For more information on formula and feeding your baby, please see:

- For more information on feeding your baby formula visit HealthLinkBC File #69a: Feeding Your Baby Formula: Before You Start.
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/hfile/69a>
- For more information on safely making and storing formula visit HealthLinkBC File #69b: Feeding Your Baby Formula: Safely Making and Storing Formula.
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/hfile/69b>
- For more information on feeding your baby solid foods visit HealthLinkBC File #69c: Baby’s First Foods. <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/hfile/69c>
- For more information on dental care for your baby, see HealthLinkBC File #19: Dental Care for Your Infant and Toddler.
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/hfile/19>
- For more information, call HealthLinkBC at **8-1-1** to speak with a registered dietitian or nurse. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages. Dietitians are available Monday to Friday 9 AM to 5 PM and nurses are available anytime. For deaf and hard of hearing assistance (TTY), call **7-1-1**. You can also [email a HealthLinkBC dietitian](#).
- Find your local Public Health Unit at:
www.healthlinkbc.ca/services-and-resources/find-services
- Other local services: _____

Thank you for reading this booklet. Your public health nurse or health care provider can also discuss all the available options to meet your baby’s nutritional needs, and can support you to safely feed your baby. Being well informed is one of the many ways that you show how much you care about your baby.



Acknowledgements:

This resource was adapted with permission from the BFI Strategy for Ontario. The BFI Strategy is a partnership of the Michael Garron Hospital, the Best Start Resource Center and the Provincial Council for Maternal and Child Health. The Ontario version of this resource was funded by the Government of Ontario and released in 2017. Thanks go as well to members of the BFI Strategy Implementation Committee, and the many professionals who provided input. Thank you to Marg La Salle, BFI Assessor for her contributions. Finally, a big thank you goes to mothers who reviewed this document.

