

Fact Sheet

Bottle-feeding – Important information

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The World Health Organisation (WHO) and NSW Health recommend that babies receive only breast milk during the first six months of life.

At around 6 months of age family foods may be introduced to your baby as well as your baby continuing to breastfeed until two years of age and beyond.

Breastfeeding is the normal and safest way to feed your baby.

The First Feed

After the birth, it is important that your baby is placed skin to skin with you for as long as possible

- skin to skin contact means that the baby is placed naked on your skin (between your breasts) with a towel or blanket placed over the top of both of you
- ensure your baby's nose is clear and the baby is able to breathe
- this will keep your baby warm and help your baby to get healthy germs from your skin onto theirs. These germs are important for baby's health
- you are encouraged to have skin to skin contact for at least one hour and as often as possible during the early days and weeks
- when your baby shows signs that they are ready to feed, it is time to offer your baby their first feed
- the midwives caring for you will support and help you.



Bottle-feeding- Choosing an Infant Formula

If you are unable to breastfeed your baby or choose not to you will need to feed your baby a **standard infant formula** (Cow's Milk based formula) for the first 12 months of baby's life.

What is an infant formula?

Standard infant formulas are based on cow's milk. Dried cow's milk is made into powder and modified so that it is suitable for babies to drink.



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What type of formula should my baby have?

Standard Formula (Suitable from birth)

- it is suitable for your baby to continue with this formula from birth till 12 months of age
- all brands of standard infant formula contain similar ingredients (according to the Food Standards of Australia & New Zealand)

Follow on formula (6-12 months)

- These have a different type of protein and there is no medical reason to change your baby's formula at 6 months.

Cow's Milk

Cow's milk is not recommended for feeding your baby before 12 months of age. If your baby is not receiving breast milk, they need to be fed a standard infant formula for the first 12 months of life.

Unmodified cow's milk is high in protein and salt, and low in vitamins and iron. It is not good for your baby's immature kidneys. Small amounts on cereals and in custards are okay once the baby is six months old and is eating family foods.

It is safe to give your toddler cow's milk to drink from 12 months of age.

Bottle-feeding-Choosing Bottles and Teats

Choosing bottles

There are many different bottles to choose from. A standard clear plastic or glass bottle will be suitable to feed your baby.

If you are using plastic feeding bottles, ensure that the bottles are BPA free.

It is suggested that you buy 4 to 6 large bottles so that you don't have to buy bigger bottles once baby begins to take more than 150 mls at a feed. The bottle should fit comfortably in your hand as you will be holding your baby to feed for many months.

Choosing teats

Teats are available in lots of shapes and sizes. It is recommended that you choose silicon teats to feed your baby because of the chemicals that may be present in rubber teats.

Teats are also available with different flow rates - super slow, slow, moderate and fast.

It is recommended that you use peristaltic (super slow) flow teat. This will allow your baby to feed more at their own pace and ensure that they have enough sucking time.

There is no need to change the flow of the teat as the baby grows! There is no research to support using orthodontic or winged teats.

You will need to bring your own formula powder, bottles and teats to use while you are in hospital

Feeding your baby

Close contact with your baby helps you and your baby to get to know each other. During feeds, **holding your baby close**, talking and making eye contact helps you both to develop a close bond. It is important to hold your baby for every bottle feed even when baby is old enough to hold the bottle on their own.

Watching your baby's feeding cues will help you to know when your baby is hungry and ready to feed.

Encourage your baby to open their mouth by gently placing the bottle teat on their lips, before placing the teat in your baby's mouth. If your baby does not start sucking, gentle movement of the bottle teat against the palate (roof of the mouth) will encourage baby's sucking reflex.

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How long should a feed last.

Most babies feed between 20 – 30 minutes. When your baby stops sucking, it is important to rest the bottle down so that the milk stops flowing and baby has time to rest and manage the milk flow. Lift up the bottle to start the feed once your baby starts sucking again.

It is important that your baby takes the feed slowly so that they will stop feeding when they are comfortably full. If your baby feeds quickly they may over feed and there is a risk of choking or vomiting.

If your baby is taking longer than 40 minutes to feed each time, they may become tired and be slow to gain weight. Be sure to check the flow of the teat and that the formula has been made up correctly.

If you are concerned about your baby's feeding, see your Child and family Health nurse, Midwife or local doctor

How often should my baby feed?

Most newborn babies will have between 7 to 8 bottle feeds in 24 hours. The feeds need to be offered according to your baby's cues and not on a strict schedule. Your baby should have at least 6 feeds in 24 hours in the early days and weeks of life.

Important Points to remember

- always wash hands before preparing baby's bottles and use a clean surface to prepare the infant formula
- if you change the formula you are using, be sure to read the instructions carefully on the new can so that you add the correct number of scoops to the correct amount of water
- Check the expiry date on the can when purchasing it. Discard the can of formula one month after opening

- **always** use the scoop that is provided with the tin of formula you are using. It is important that you do not use a scoop from another tin of infant formula
- always add a levelled scoop, never use half a scoop. Be sure to add powder to the water when making formula
- never add extra water when preparing the formula as this may cause inadequate weight gain. If your baby needs water for a drink, offer it separately
- adding extra scoops of formula is not recommended as it may harm your baby's kidneys and lead to unhealthy weight gain
- when transporting baby's milk, always carry the water and powder separately. Make the bottle up when your baby is ready for a feed
- if other people make your baby's bottles, make sure that they have been shown how to make the formula safely
- never prop the bottle for your baby to feed. This can lead to choking, tooth decay and ear infections. Always hold your baby whilst they are feeding, it is important for your baby's emotional and brain development
- only warm the milk (bottle) for up to five minutes. Warming longer than 5 minutes is likely to increase bacterial growth in the formula
- never use a microwave to heat your baby's formula. This cooks the formula which damages the nutrients in the milk and may burn your baby's mouth

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- bacteria grows easily in milk so throw away any formula your baby does not drink within one hour.

We welcome further feedback on this brochure as a way of continually improving our service.

Send your feedback to:

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