

Infant formula feeding



If your child is under one year of age and is not receiving an adequate amount of breast milk, it is important that they are offered a commercial infant formula. This will supply all the nutrients needed for growth up to about 6 months of age and will supplement solid food until 12 months. Cow's milk, modified cow's milk, goat's milk, rice milk, soy milk or alternative homemade recipes should not be given to infants.

Types of infant formula available

All infant formula sold in Australia conform to the Australia New Zealand Food Standard Code (Standard 2.9.1 – Infant Formula Products). Infant formula labelled 'suitable from birth' and made from cow's milk is suitable for most babies. If you feel you need to commence another sort of formula like soy, you should discuss this with your child and family nurse or GP.

How much infant formula does by baby need each day?

- All babies need different amounts at different times. They will drink as much as they need, which may not necessarily be a full bottle. There are guidelines on the formula tin, but if your baby is well allow them to have what they want. You will find it will even out over a few days.
- Babies may be offered sips of cooled, boiled water in warmer weather, in addition to the required amounts of formula.
- Once your baby starts solids don't forget to also offer them cooled, boiled water. While solids and formula satisfy hunger, water will satisfy your baby's thirst.
- See your doctor or child and family nurse if you are concerned about your baby's appetite or growth.

Mixing and storing infant formula

- Check the use by date and use infant formula within one month of opening the tin.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and clean your working space.
- Make sure bottles and teats have been cleaned with a bottle brush in warm soapy water, rinsed and sterilised either by using a microwave steam steriliser or boiling for 10 minutes on the stove.



- Follow the manufacturer's instructions exactly when making up infant formula as it is important your baby receives the correct nutrition.
Note: use the measuring scoop supplied, always levelling off the scoop.
- Place the disc and cap on the bottle and shake until the infant formula is thoroughly mixed.
- Formula bottles may be pre-made and stored in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours. Keep made-up bottles in the back of the fridge where it is coolest.
- Alternatively, measured formula may be stored in an airtight container and added to measured cooled, boiled water in the bottle. Boiled water in the bottle may be left at room temperature before the addition of formula, so this is a good method when travelling.

Warming the bottle

While it is not harmful to feed cold infant formula to babies, most people prefer to warm the mixture first.

You should:

- Warm the bottle by standing it in a container of hot (not boiling) water for 10 minutes
- Test the temperature by turning the bottle upside down and pouring a few drops on the inside of your wrist. It should feel the same temperature as your skin
- Never warm a bottle in the microwave oven as it does not heat evenly, and there may be 'hot spots' in the bottle that can burn your baby's mouth.

Enjoy mealtimes with your baby

Just as adults and children enjoy being with each other at mealtimes, so do babies. Hold your baby close to your body, facing you, when feeding.

Remember, don't prop up a bottle in a cot and leave your baby to feed alone as they may choke. Also, there is also a higher risk of middle ear infection and tooth decay among children who are regularly fed this way.

This information has been adapted from:

McVeagh and Reed, 2001. Kids Food Health. Vol.1 Finch, Australia

Victorian Health Foundation. Better Health Channel - Fact sheet, Bottle feeding with formula Available at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au accessed February 2007

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand – Fact sheet, New Directions for infant formula products-