



## Feeding your baby formula

### Safely making and storing formula

Human milk (breast milk) is the only food your baby needs for the first 6 months of life. After 6 months continue to offer human milk, along with solid foods, until your child is two years of age or older.

Parents may give their baby infant formula for a variety of reasons. Store-bought infant formula made from cow's milk is recommended for most formula fed babies. Offer infant formula until your baby is 9 to 12 months of age.

Soy-based infant formulas are only recommended for babies with a medical condition called galactosemia (g-lak-toh-see-me-ah) or for babies who do not drink dairy for religious or cultural reasons.

Do not feed home-made infant formula, cow's milk or other animal milk to your baby. They are not safe and do not give your baby the complete nutrition they need to grow and develop.

If you have questions or concerns about feeding your baby, contact your health care provider, a public health nurse or a lactation consultant. You can also call HealthLink BC at **8-1-1** to speak with a registered nurse or registered dietitian.

#### What are the different types of infant formula?

There are 3 types of store-bought formula: ready-to-feed; liquid concentrate; and powdered. Ready-to-feed and liquid concentrate are sterile (free from germs) until they are opened. Powdered formula is not sterile. For information on what type of formula to offer, see [HealthLinkBC File #69a Feeding Your Baby Formula: Before You Start](#).

#### How do I clean and disinfect the bottles and equipment to make formula?

Every time you make formula, wash, then disinfect the bottles and equipment for as long as your

baby drinks formula. Disinfect means to kill any germs that could make your baby sick.

#### To clean:

1. Gather together the feeding equipment such as bottles, measuring cups and spoons
2. Wash your hands with soap and warm water. Dry with a clean towel
3. Wash your sink and work area with soap and warm water
4. Wash all feeding equipment in hot, soapy water. Use a bottle brush to scrub the inside of the bottles and nipples. Only use that brush to clean bottles and nipples
5. Rinse everything in hot water

#### To disinfect:

1. Place the clean supplies in a large pot
2. Fill the pot with water until everything is covered with water. Do not cover the pot
3. Bring the water to a boil and boil for 2 minutes
4. Use disinfected tongs to remove all items from the pot. If you don't use these items right away, let them air dry on a clean paper towel or cloth. When they are dry, cover and store them in a clean place. Do not touch the inside of any equipment that can be in contact with the formula

If you use a home sterilizer system to disinfect, follow the manufacturer's instructions. Dishwashers do not disinfect.

#### How do I prepare and store ready-to-feed formula?

Do not add water to ready-to-feed formula. Pour the amount you think your baby will drink into a clean and disinfected bottle.

Store unopened ready-to-feed formula cans in a cool, dry place. Store opened cans of formula in the fridge. Cover opened cans with plastic caps or plastic wrap. Throw cans out after 48 hours or follow label instructions.

### How do I make and store liquid concentrate formula?

To make liquid concentrate formula, follow these steps:

1. Boil water in a kettle or in a pot on the stove for 2 minutes. If you use a kettle, make sure it does not shut-off by itself as soon as the water starts to boil.
2. Let the boiled water cool to room temperature before mixing it with the formula.
3. Carefully measure and mix the formula, following the directions on the label. The label will tell you how much liquid concentrate and water to use.

If you make more than 1 bottle at a time, cool them quickly under cold running water or in a bowl filled with cold water and ice. Store them in the fridge and use within 24 hours.

Store unopened liquid concentrate formula cans in a cool, dry place. Store opened cans of formula in the fridge. Cover opened cans with plastic caps or plastic wrap. Throw cans out after 48 hours or follow label instructions.

### How do I make and store powdered formula?

The safest way to make powdered formula is to follow these steps:

1. Boil water in a kettle or in a pot on the stove for 2 minutes. If you use a kettle, make sure it does not shut-off by itself as soon as the water starts to boil.
2. Let the boiled water cool to no less than 70°C (158°F). Water less than 70°C (158°F) is not hot enough to kill harmful germs that may be in the powder. Use a digital thermometer to check the temperature.
3. Follow the directions on the formula label to measure and mix the water and formula together. The label will tell you how much formula powder and water to use.

4. Cool the formula to feeding temperature and use right away.

If you make more than 1 bottle at a time, cool the bottles quickly under cold running water or in a bowl filled with cold water and ice. Store them in the fridge and use within 24 hours.

For healthy, full-term infants, you can use water that has been boiled for 2 minutes and cooled to room temperature to prepare powdered infant formula. Use the formula right after making it.

Infant formula machines are not recommended because the water may not be kept at a safe temperature.

Store unopened powdered formula cans in a cool, dry place. Once the cans are opened, store in a cool, dry place with the lids tightly closed. Do not store them in the fridge. After a can is open, use

To safely store any infant formula, your fridge must be 4°C (39°F) or cooler. If you are not sure, use a fridge thermometer.

the rest of the powdered formula within 1 month, and before the expiration date. To help you remember, write the date when you first open the can on the lid.

### How do I get the formula to the right temperature to feed my baby?

If just made, powdered formula is too hot to feed to your baby. Cool it by putting the bottle under cold running water or in a bowl filled with cold water and ice.

Formula stored in the fridge can be fed to your baby right out of the fridge or warmed first. Your baby will show you what they prefer. Warm it by putting the bottle in a bottle warmer or in a bowl of hot water for no more than 15 minutes. Make sure the ring of the bottle and the nipple do not get wet from the tap water.

Test the temperature by shaking the bottle 1 to 2 times and pour a few drops of formula on the inside of your wrist. If the formula feels warm, but not hot, then you can feed it to your baby.

Do not warm formula in the microwave. Microwaves heat unevenly and create hot spots. Hot spots in the formula could burn your baby's mouth.

Once you start feeding, use the bottle within 2 hours. Throw out any leftover formula. Do not reheat formula during a feed or refrigerate a partly used bottle.

### **How can I feed my baby away from home?**

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 the formula within 2 hours.

If you plan to be away from home for longer than 2 hours, the safest option is to bring unopened ready-to-feed formula with you.

### **For more information**

To learn more about infant feeding, see:  
[Baby's Best Chance](#).