



# Infant Formula Feeding

Giving your baby the nutrition she needs is important for healthy growth and development. Commercial infant formula is the suitable choice if breast milk is not an option or if you choose to give your baby some formula.

Many parents ask if there is a formula that is close to breast milk. Breast milk cannot be created in a lab. It is unique to each human baby, has the right amount of nutrients for healthy growth, and living cells that keep babies from getting sick. If possible, consider providing some breast milk to your baby.

## Risks and Costs:

- Formula fed babies may be more likely to develop allergies, diarrhea, colds and ear infections.
- Formula feeding costs more than breastfeeding.
- Bottles, nipples, pots and stoves are needed for formula.
- It takes time and care to prepare safely.

## Consider Providing Some Breast Milk

A public health nurse or lactation consultant can help you:

- work out problems with breastfeeding,
- learn how to pump your breast milk,
- find screened donor human milk (currently access is limited by availability and cost), or
- start breastfeeding again if you have stopped.

## Choose a Regular Cow Milk-Based Commercial Infant Formula

Regular cow milk-based commercial infant formula will meet your baby's needs for the first year of life. All commercial infant formulas have similar ingredients and must meet Health Canada's rules for nutrition and safety before being sold.

- Formulas not approved by Health Canada (e.g., purchased online from other countries, homemade formulas, etc.) may be harmful and may not meet the needs of babies.
  - » Do not feed your baby homemade formula; cow, goat, evaporated or condensed milk; soy, rice or almond beverages; coffee whitener, teas or anything else. They are missing nutrients and can be harmful.
  - » For more information on homemade formulas go to the Health Canada website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/healthy-eating/infant-feeding/safety-homemade-infant-formulas-canada.html>.
  - » All commercial infant formula has enough iron and will meet the needs of your baby with iron rich foods added at about 6 months of age.
- Infant formulas are sold in three forms: liquid ready-to-use, liquid concentrate and powdered.
  - » Liquid formulas (ready-to-use and concentrate) are safer because they are sterile until opened.
  - » Powdered infant formula is not sterile. If liquid formula is not available, powdered can be used if properly prepared.
  - » Liquid concentrate and powdered formula must be carefully prepared according to the directions on the package to be safe.



## Other Types of Formula and Milk are Rarely Needed

There are many types of formulas and milks that are advertised and available to buy.

- Most of the time it is best to stay with one formula. Changing formula will not usually help your baby be less fussy or cry less.
- Babies with medical conditions may need different formulas. If your baby has a milk allergy, metabolic disorder or other condition, talk to your health care provider.
- For more information see the "Guide to Formulas and Milks" on page 6.

## Follow the Manufacturer's Instructions on the Formula Label

For information on how to safely prepare and handle formula, see **Infant Formula - What You Need to Know** at [https://www.beststart.org/resources/breastfeeding/B19/FormulaBooklet\\_B19-E.pdf](https://www.beststart.org/resources/breastfeeding/B19/FormulaBooklet_B19-E.pdf).

- **Follow the instructions on the label of the formula package very carefully.**
- Make sure your hands and counters are cleaned with soap and warm water before starting.
- Sterilize bottles, nipples, etc. by boiling them in water for two minutes.
- Make sure formula has not passed the expiry date on the package.
- Liquid Concentrate Formula and Powdered Infant Formula need to be mixed with water before feeding to your baby.
  - » Use cold tap water, safe well water, or bottled water. Never use carbonated, mineral, vitamin or flavoured water.
  - » Boil water used for preparing formula for two minutes. Cool prior to mixing. Talk to your health care professional about when it is okay to stop boiling water for baby's formula. Make one bottle at a time.

» If you choose to prepare more than one bottle at a time see **Infant Formula - What You Need to Know** at [https://www.beststart.org/resources/breastfeeding/B19/FormulaBooklet\\_B19-E.pdf](https://www.beststart.org/resources/breastfeeding/B19/FormulaBooklet_B19-E.pdf).

- Formula mixing machines may not be safe for preparing formula. For more information contact your public health office or Health Canada's Product Safety Program at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/contact-us/manitoba-saskatchewan-regional-product-safety-offices.html>
- If your baby likes warm formula, put the bottle of formula in a container of warm water or a bottle warmer for no more than 15 minutes. Harmful bacteria can grow if you leave it longer.
  - » Shake the bottle to make sure it is evenly warmed.
  - » Test the temperature by shaking a few drops on the inside of your wrist. The formula should feel the same as your skin temperature. It should not be hot.
  - » Do not use a microwave oven to warm formula. It can create "hot spots" that can burn your baby's mouth.
- Any leftovers in the bottle that have not been used within 2 hours should be thrown away. Do not reuse it.

### Replace Damaged Bottles and Nipples Regularly

- Check **bottles** often and replace them when cracked or chipped.
- **Nipples** need to be replaced when discoloured, swollen, cracked, broken, sticky to touch, or if formula comes out too quickly.
- The flow speeds of nipples can vary. A slow flow nipple with a smaller hole is best for a newborn baby. A faster flow nipple is okay for an older baby.
- For more information go to Infant Care on the Healthy Canadians website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/infant-care/bottles-pacifiers-teething-necklaces.html>.

## How Much and How Often Your Baby Eats will Vary

How much and how often your baby eats will change over time.

- Baby's appetite will vary day to day and feeding to feeding depending on age, activity and growth.
- Feedings are small and often for newborns. As your baby's stomach grows, feedings are larger and less often.
- Feeding in the night is often needed to help your baby grow and develop well.



- How much formula to prepare will vary. Every baby is different. Your baby may drink more or less than these amounts:
  - » In the first week after birth, babies **may** only drink 415mL (14oz) to 650mL (22oz) in 24 hours.
  - » Babies less than 6 months old **may** drink about 475mL (16oz) to 1095 mL (37oz) per day including night time feeds.
  - » Older babies, who are learning to eat solid foods, **may** drink about 300mL (10oz) to 1035mL (35oz) per day.
- Babies usually drink formula more often when they are younger (about 6-10 times per day) and less often as they get older (about 3-4 times per day). During a growth spurt your baby may want extra feedings or more at a feeding.

Your baby is getting enough to eat if she is growing well (based on the WHO Growth Charts for Canada\*) and has regular wet and poopy diapers.

- Babies usually have about six wet diapers and 2-4 poopy diapers a day but your baby will have her own pattern.
- Baby's pee should be clear and pale yellow.
- Colour and number of poops vary. Formula fed babies may have firmer poops than breastfed babies. Talk to your doctor or public health nurse if your baby has dry hard stools (constipation).

\*<http://www.dietitians.ca/Dietitians-Views/Prenatal-and-Infant/WHO-Growth-Charts.aspx>

## Follow Baby's Feeding Cues

All babies are different and have their own feeding patterns. Your baby's feeding cues will tell you when and how much to feed. Do not expect your baby to follow a schedule or drink the amount of formula you have prepared.

- Feed your baby when he shows signs of hunger. Stop feeding him when he shows you he has had enough to eat.
- Be alert for feeding cues so that you can feed before baby cries. Feed your baby when he is calm. Upset babies don't eat well.



## Signs of Hunger

- Stirring
- Sucking actions and sounds
- Turning toward your body with open mouth
- Fingers in mouth
- Restlessness
- Soft cooing
- Crying (late feeding cue)

- If your baby is closing his mouth, pushing or turning away, or falling asleep, he has had enough formula.
- Let your baby eat as much or as little as he wants.
- Never force your baby to finish the bottle. Throw out any formula that is left in the bottle.

## Only Give Recommended Supplements

### Vitamin D

- All commercial infant formulas have vitamin D added. A vitamin D supplement is not needed if your baby is only getting commercial infant formula (unless prescribed by a doctor).
- If you are feeding your baby both breast milk and formula, give your baby a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU (10 µg) every day.

### Iron

- Only give iron supplements to your baby if your doctor tells you to.
- At about 6 months of age, most babies will be showing signs of being ready for solid foods. The first foods you give your baby should be sources of iron such as cooked meat, poultry, deboned fish, tofu, well cooked egg, lentils, black beans, chickpeas, kidney beans or a single grain infant cereal. These foods will help to make sure your baby gets the iron she needs. For more information about introducing solids see ***Growing Up Healthy: You and Your 6-12 month old*** at [www.saskatchewan.ca](http://www.saskatchewan.ca).

## Tips for Feeding Your Baby

- Create a quiet and pleasant space where you and your baby can relax. Focus on baby instead of your phone, television or other screens.
- Feed him when he is awake, calm and hungry. Look into your baby's eyes while you are feeding him.
- Talk to or sing to him to help him stay awake during feeding. If your baby falls asleep with a bottle, the formula will pool in the baby's mouth and can cause cavities or ear infections.



- Let your baby feel your warmth and security. Cuddle often skin to skin.
- Hold her close, supporting her head, back and bottom. To help prevent choking, hold her head higher than her body. Never leave your baby with a propped bottle.

- Alternate the arm you use to hold your baby. This will help her to use both eyes while looking at you.
- Offer the bottle by gently touching the nipple just below baby's bottom lip or inside the lip against the gum. Wait for him to open his mouth wide. During feeding, most of the nipple should be in the baby's mouth.
- Be patient. It's okay for her to pause while feeding to rest, burp or "talk".
- Burp your baby after each feeding. Newborn babies need to burp more often. You may need to stop during a feeding to burp your baby.
- Give only formula or breast milk by bottle.
- Slowly change from using a bottle to using only an open cup by 18 months of age. (See "Drinking from a Cup" under resources at <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/wellness-and-prevention/dental-oral-health#brushing-flossing-and-diet>).
- You can give small amounts of water in an open cup when your baby can sit up without support (at about 6 months).
- Whole milk can be given at 12 months (not before 9 months of age). Give it in an open cup.
- To prevent cavities, wipe your baby's mouth with a clean wet washcloth every day. When teeth appear, brush them with a wet soft toothbrush twice a day.

For more information contact your local public health office: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/public-health/public-health-offices>.

# Guide to Formulas and Milks

✓ = okay to give ✗ = do not give

Type of Formula or Milk	Infants 0-6 months	Infants 6 months - 1 year	Toddlers 1-2 years
Breast milk	✓ <i>Recommended</i>	✓ <i>Recommended</i>	✓ <i>Recommended</i>
Regular cow milk-based commercial infant formula	✓	✓	✗ <i>Only needed if recommended by a health professional</i>
Whole pasteurized cow or goat milk (fortified with vitamin D) as main milk drink	✗	✗ <i>Not recommended as main milk drink until about 1 year</i>	✓
Skim, 1% & 2% pasteurized cow or goat milk	✗	✗	✗
Homemade formula made with whole evaporated cow or goat milk (fortified)	✗	✗	✗
Evaporated whole cow or goat milk (undiluted & fortified)	✗	✗	✓
Specialty commercial infant formula available over the counter (e.g., anti-reflux, lactose-free, and hydrolyzed)	✗ <i>Only use under medical supervision</i>	✗ <i>Only use under medical supervision</i>	✗ <i>Only use under medical supervision</i>
Soy-based commercial infant formula	✗ <i>Only use for cultural or religious reasons or under medical supervision</i>	✗ <i>Only use for cultural or religious reasons or under medical supervision</i>	✗
Soy-based follow-up (step 2) commercial formula	✗	✗	✗ <i>Only use for cultural or religious reasons or if recommended by a health professional</i>
Cow-based follow-up (step 2) commercial formula	✗	✗ <i>Not needed</i>	✗ <i>Not needed</i>
Pediatric nutrition drinks or shakes (for 1-13 year olds)	✗	✗	✗
Plant-based beverages (e.g., rice, almond, soy, coconut)— <b>Do not give to children under 2 years of age.</b>	✗	✗	✗