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## Infant Formula

### Is it okay to feed my baby formula?

Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for your baby. However, some women are unable or choose not to breastfeed. In these cases, baby formulas are an option. Baby formulas are specially made to meet babies' nutritional needs. Even some women who breastfeed may at one time or another use formula to supplement their breast milk. If you plan to use formula, here are some pointers.

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### How do I choose the right formula for my baby?

Your family doctor will probably recommend a formula made from cow's milk. Some formulas are iron-fortified. This means they have extra iron in them. Some formulas have very little iron or none at all. Most doctors recommend using an iron-fortified formula.

Some formulas are made from soy milk instead of cow's milk. If your baby seems to be allergic to formula made from cow's milk, your doctor may suggest using a soy-milk formula.

If you're not breastfeeding, use infant formula during the first year of your baby's life. Regular cow's milk and regular soy milk are not the same as infant formula made from cow's milk or from soy milk. Regular cow's milk and regular soy milk do not contain all of the nutrients that your baby needs to grow and develop. Babies younger than 1 who drink regular cow's milk or regular soy milk are at risk for problems associated with low iron.

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### How often should I feed my baby?

Feed your baby as often as he or she wants to be fed. This may be 8 to 12 times a day or more in the beginning. Your baby may want to be fed less often as he or she grows, and is able to take more formula at each feeding. How often your baby wants to feed will also change over time as he or she goes through growth spurts. Growth spurts typically occur at about 2 and 6 weeks of age and again at about 3 and 6 months of age.

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### Baby formula is sold in several forms:

#### **Ready-to-use**

This is the most expensive kind of formula, but no mixing is necessary.

#### **Concentrated liquid**

This is a less expensive formula. You mix the formula liquid with an equal part of water.

#### **Powder**

This is the least expensive formula. You mix one level scoop of powdered formula with 2 ounces of water and stir well.

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## How much formula should I give my baby?

Your doctor will give you an idea of how much to feed your baby when you first start using formula. Most babies need 2.5 ounces of formula per pound of body weight each day. This means that an 8-pound baby may drink about 20 ounces of formula a day. However, this is just an estimate. The most important thing when feeding your baby is to pay attention to your baby's cues. Other than crying, signs that your baby may be hungry include smacking his or her lips, sucking and rooting (turning his or her head toward your hand when you touch his or her face).

Each baby's nutritional needs are different and change overtime. Your baby is probably getting enough formula if he or she:

- Acts satisfied after each feeding.
- Gains weight constantly after the first 3 to 7 days after birth. Your baby may lose a little weight during the first week after being born.
- Has about 6 to 8 wet diapers a day.
- Has about 2 to 5 or more stools a day at first, and then has 2 or less stools a day as your baby grows. Your baby's stools will be runny at first.

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## What's the right way to mix formula?

The most important thing to know is that you must follow the directions on the formula container exactly. Always measure carefully and never add extra water to the formula. You should also wash your hands before preparing the formula.

If you use well water or if there are problems with the water in your town, boil the water first or use bottled water. If you boil the water, let it cool off before mixing it with the formula. Always use a clean cup to measure the water.

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## How do I know if I need to switch to a different formula?

Sometimes it may be necessary to change the kind of formula you give to your baby. If your baby is always fussy, needs more iron, or has certain food allergies, your doctor may suggest you change your baby's formula to a different kind. Some of the signs that your baby is allergic to the type of formula you're feeding him or her are:

- Dry, red and scaly skin
- Diarrhea
- Extreme fatigue or weakness
- Forceful vomiting

Other signs include more crying or fussiness after a feeding, excessive gas and very loose, watery stools. However, changing your baby's formula is not necessarily the answer if you're concerned about your baby's stool habits or about the color or consistency of your baby's stool. How often babies soil their diapers, and the color and consistency of their stool is different from baby to baby. Talk with your doctor before changing your baby's formula--you may not need to change it after all.

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## How do I warm my baby's bottles?

You can probably feed your baby a bottle without warming it first. It is okay for the formula to be cool or room temperature. If your baby seems to prefer warm formula, you can put the filled bottle in a container of warm water and let it stand for a few minutes. Check the temperature of the formula on your skin before feeding it to your baby, to be sure it isn't too hot. The formula should only be lukewarm.

Do not heat bottles in the microwave. Microwaves heat foods and liquids unevenly, and this can cause hot spots in the formula that can burn your baby.

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## How do I clean and sterilize bottles?

Sterilize bottles and nipples before you use them for the first time. You can do this by putting them in boiling water for 5 minutes. After that first time, you probably don't need to sterilize them again. Instead, wash bottle, nipples and caps in hot, soapy water. Rinse them carefully to remove any soap residue. You can also run them through the dishwasher, which kills more germs than washing by hand.

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## Source

[Written by familydoctor.org editorial staff.](#)

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