

How to Prepare and Feed Ready-to-Feed Infant Formula

- Breast feeding is the best way to feed your baby. Babies who are not breastfed or are partially breastfed will need a commercial infant formula.
- For the first six months of life breast milk or infant formula is the only food that your baby needs to grow and be healthy. When your baby is six months old, begin adding solid foods while continuing to give breast milk or infant formula.
- Continue to breastfeed your baby until age two or beyond. If you feed your baby with infant formula continue until 9 to 12 months old.

What type of infant formula should I choose?

- Choose a formula that is based on cow's milk protein.
- Choose a formula that is iron-fortified.
- Try to choose a formula that has the omega-3 fats DHA and ALA added. These fats help your baby's brain and eyes develop.
- Formula comes in 3 forms: powder, liquid concentrate, and ready-to-feed. The instructions are different for each kind of formula.
- You do not need to add water to ready-to-feed formula. It could harm your baby if you add water.

This factsheet will help you safely prepare and feed ready-to-feed infant formula.



Steps you can take

Ready-to-feed infant formula is sterile until the can is open. This means it does not contain any harmful bacteria.

How to Prepare Ready-to-feed Infant Formula

1. Gather what you will need to prepare ready-to-feed infant formula:

- Bottles, nipples, caps, rims
- Nipple brush and bottle brush
- Can opener
- Tongs
- Glass measuring cup

2. Clean your hands, counter and all items that you will use to prepare formula.

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds. Rinse well. Dry hands with a paper towel. You may need to wash your hands more than once as you follow the steps.
- Clean and sanitize the counter top.
- Wash bottles and other items that will be used to prepare formula in warm soapy water. Use nipple and bottle brushes. Rinse well.

3. Sterilize items that you will use to prepare formula.

- Put items in a pot. Cover with water. Put lid on the pot and bring water to a boil. Time for at least 2 minutes when the water reaches a rolling boil.
- Remove items with sterile tongs. Set on a clean paper towel or tea towel to cool.

4. Open the can of ready-to-feed formula.

- Check “use by” dates on the can of formula. Do not use after that date.
- Make sure the can is clean and has no dents.
- Wash the top of the can with very hot water.
- Shake the can well.
- Open the can with a sterile can opener.

5. Pour ready-to-feed formula into bottles.

- Pour the amount of formula for one feeding into each bottle.
- DO NOT ADD WATER.
- Pick up nipple, rim and cap with sterile tongs and put on the bottles. Tighten with your hands.
- Make only the amount of bottles you will need for two days or less.

How to store prepared formula:

- If you have prepared more than one bottle, put tightly sealed bottles in the refrigerator. Check that your refrigerator is 4 C or below. Harmful bacterial can grow if your refrigerator is above 4 C.
- Use bottles within 48 hours.
- Do not freeze prepared formula. Freezing changes the fat in infant formula.

How to Feed Your Baby

1. Getting formula to the right temperature

Warming:

- To warm prepared formula, place the bottle in a bottle warmer or in a container of hot water for no more than 15 minutes. It should

be between room and body temperature.

- Do not warm bottles in the microwave. It can create hotspots that can scald your baby's mouth.
- Shake or swirl the bottle well. Test a few drops of the formula on the inside of your wrist to check the temperature.

2. Feeding

- Before you feed your baby, check that the hole in the nipple is the right size. When you hold the bottle upside down, about one drop per second should come out.
- Always hold your baby when giving a bottle. Never prop the bottle or leave your baby to feed himself. Propping a bottle can cause choking.
- Tilt the bottle up so that the nipple is full of formula. This will prevent your baby from swallowing air and causing gas.
- Never put your baby to bed with a bottle. It can cause choking and tooth decay.
- Never force the nipple into your baby's mouth. Stop feeding when your baby has had enough. Your baby has had enough when his sucking slows, he turns his head away, or he falls asleep.
- Burp your baby as needed. You may need to burp both during and after a feeding.
- Throw away leftover formula if your baby does not finish the bottle within 2 hours. Do not refrigerate and reuse re-heated formula. Bacteria from your baby's mouth can get into the formula and make your baby sick if he drinks it later.
- Rinse the bottle and nipple right after every feeding.

Special Considerations

How should I store the can of ready-to-feed formula?

- Tightly cover open can and put in the refrigerator (4 C or below). Use within 48 hours.
- Do not store formula in the freezer. Freezing changes the fat in

infant formula.

What types of bottles should I choose?

- Use bottles that do not contain bisphenol A (BPA). BPA is a chemical used to make some types of plastic. This chemical may be harmful to babies and young children.
- Use bottles that are labeled BPA-free or use glass bottles. If you have bottles that have BPA, do not put very hot or boiling water in them.

What should I do if my baby is having problems with the formula?

- Talk to your baby's health care professional if you feel that your baby is having problems with the formula you are using.



Additional Resources

- For more information on Bisphenol A see the Government of Canada's web site www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca/fact-fait/bisphenol-a-eng.php
- EatRight Ontario handouts:
 - How to Prepare and Feed Liquid Concentrate Infant Formula www.onpen.ca/Docviewer.asp?id=8897
 - How to Prepare and Feed Powdered Infant Formula www.onpen.ca/Docviewer.asp?id=8898

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Notes

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- Call and speak to a Registered Dietitian, toll-free in Ontario at 1-877-510-510-2, 9 am to 5 pm ET Monday to Friday; Evening hours Tuesday and Thursday to 9 pm ET.