

# Infant Formula

Although breastfeeding is best for babies, you might have a special reason for formula feeding. If you choose to use infant formula, this brochure has important information to help keep baby healthy.

## How long should baby use infant formula?

- Plan to use infant formula until baby is at least 9 to 12 months old.

## What to look for when buying infant formula.

- Always buy infant formula with iron. It may be labeled "iron-fortified" or "added iron." Iron helps keep baby's blood healthy.
- Always check the expiry date. The expiry date may be printed on the bottom or on the sides of the package. Expired infant formula will not give baby all the nutrients needed to stay healthy.
- Always check the label for the type of infant formula you are buying for baby. Three types of infant formulas are: concentrated liquid, powder or ready-to-use.

## How to prepare different types of infant formula for baby.

It is very important not to over or under dilute formula.

Follow mixing instructions carefully.

- Concentrated liquid:**  
Mix with equal parts water.
- Powder:**  
Follow directions on can for number of scoops of powder and amount of water.
- Ready-to-use:**  
No mixing needed.



All types of infant formulas have directions on the container about preparing formula for baby.

- ✦ For infants under 4 months, sterilize bottles, nipples, lids, measuring cup, mixing jug and any other equipment.

### To sterilize:

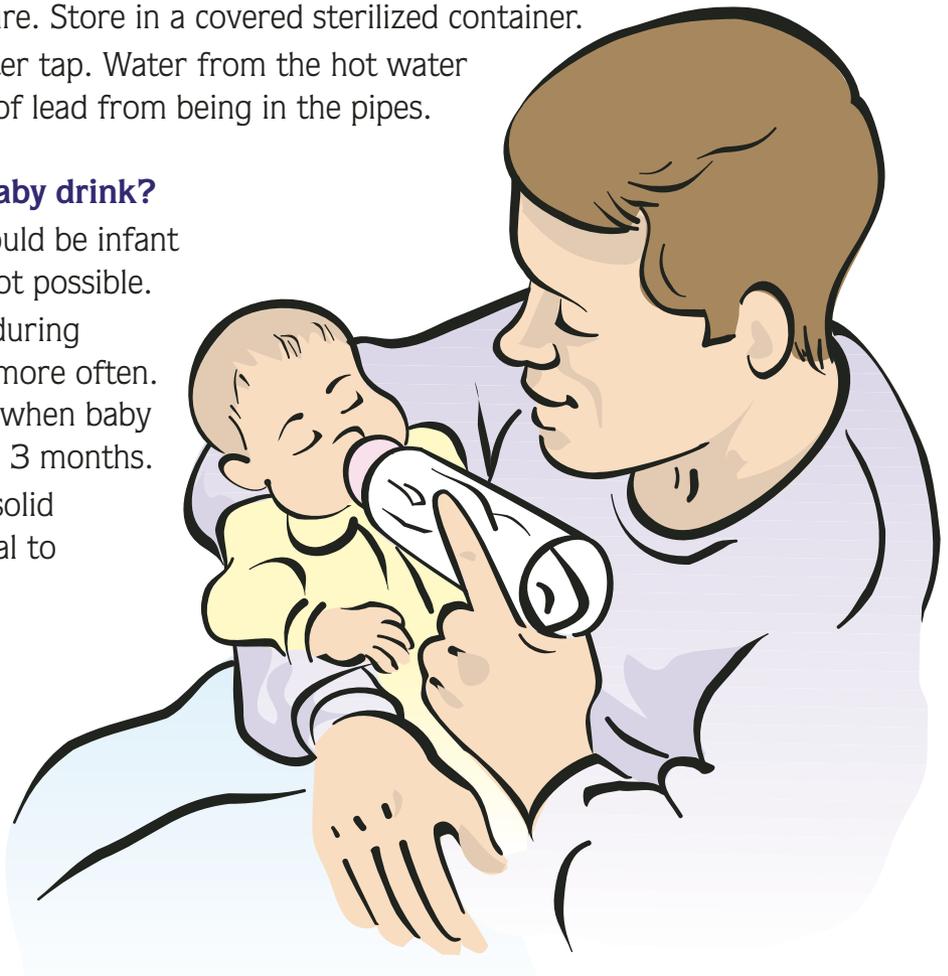
- ✦ Place all equipment in a pot of water. The water should completely cover everything in the pot. Cover the pot and bring water to a boil. Continue boiling for 2 minutes. Let cool and remove the equipment with sterilized tongs.
- ✦ Follow instructions on the formula container. Never add extra formula, water or cereal. Always use a clean bottle for each feeding.
- ✦ You can make one or several bottles at a time. Keep in the fridge. Follow instructions on the formula container for how long prepared formula can keep in the fridge. It is usually 24 - 48 hours.
- ✦ Store in a covered, sterilized container.

### Should water be boiled when preparing formula?

- ✦ For infants under 4 months of age, water should be brought to a rolling boil for at least 2 minutes. Cool before using. Boiled water can be stored for 2 - 3 days in the fridge, or 24 hours at room temperature. Store in a covered sterilized container.
- ✦ Use water from the cold water tap. Water from the hot water tap may have high amounts of lead from being in the pipes.

### How much infant formula will baby drink?

- ✦ At first, baby's only food should be infant formula if breastfeeding is not possible.
- ✦ Baby may become hungrier during growth spurts so feed baby more often. Growth spurts usually occur when baby is 2 - 3 weeks, 6 weeks, and 3 months.
- ✦ Wait until 6 months to give solid foods. Never add infant cereal to baby's bottle.



**This table is ONLY A GUIDE for the amount of formula to prepare.**

*Remember that every baby is different.*

It is important to follow baby's eating cues and to look for signs of hunger and fullness. Common signs of hunger include sucking, smacking lips, searching with an open mouth, putting fist in the mouth or crying. Signs of fullness include turning head away, covering mouth with hands, falling asleep or crying.

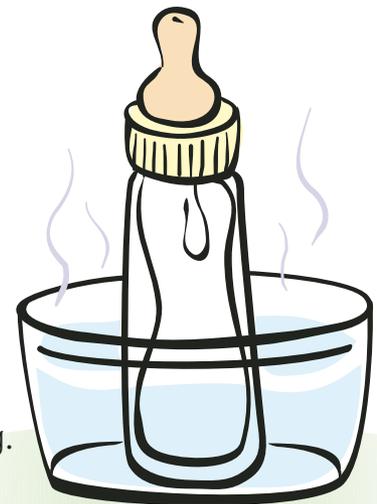
Baby's age	Number of bottles each day	Amount in each bottle	Total amount in 24 hours
Birth - 2 weeks	6 - 10	2 - 3 ounces (60 - 90ml)	12 - 30 ounces (360 - 900 ml)
3 - 8 weeks	6 - 8	3 - 4 ounces (90 - 120ml)	18 - 32 ounces (540- 960ml)
2 - 3 months	5 - 6	4 - 6 ounces (120 - 180 ml)	20 - 36 ounces (600 - 1080 ml)
4 - 5 months	5 - 6	5 - 6 ounces (150 - 180ml)	25 - 36 ounces (750 - 1080 ml)
5 - 7 months	5 - 6	5 - 6 ounces (150 - 180ml)	25 - 36 ounces (750 - 1080 ml)
7 - 9 months	4	6 - 8 ounces (180 - 240ml)	24 - 32 ounces (720 - 960 ml)
9 - 12 months	3 - 4	6 - 8 ounces (180 - 240ml)	18 - 32 ounces (540 - 960 ml)

1 ounce is approximately 30 ml

If you have questions or concerns about baby's formula intake, talk to your health care provider\*.

### How to warm the bottle for baby.

- 👉 Place bottle in a bowl of warm water.
- 👉 Do not heat in a microwave. The heat can be uneven and can cause "hot spots" that could burn baby's mouth. If you choose to microwave, use only microwave safe containers and heat for a few seconds. Shake the bottle ten times, then check the temperature of the formula.



### What is the best way to feed baby a bottle?

- 👉 Baby should be held in a semi-upright position during feeding.
- 👉 Hold and cuddle baby when feeding.
- 👉 **DO NOT** prop baby's bottle or put baby to bed with a bottle. Baby could choke.
- 👉 Never let baby fall asleep with a bottle of milk or juice. This can cause baby's teeth to rot or increase the chance of ear infections.

\* Health Care Provider refers to your physician, community health nurse, registered nutritionist, registered dietitian, lactation consultant or midwife.

### How to store prepared infant formula.

- Prepared infant formula can be stored in the fridge for 24 to 48 hours. Check the label.
- Do not leave prepared infant formula at room temperature. Throw out any formula that is left in a bottle as soon as baby is finished feeding.

### Do I need to buy follow-up formulas?

- There is no reason to switch to a follow-up formula. You can continue to use the same iron-fortified formula that baby is used to.

### Is evaporated milk the same as infant formula?

- No, evaporated milk is not an infant formula. It is missing iron, vitamins and fats that baby needs. Contact your health care provider\* for more information.

### When to offer homogenized (homo/whole) milk to baby.

- You can offer homogenized (homo/whole) milk between **9 and 12 months** of age.
- Homo milk does not contain iron. Iron is important for baby to be healthy. Before switching to homo milk, be sure baby is eating food from Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, including foods containing iron (for example, around 1/2 cup or 125 ml of dry infant cereal daily).

### Can I use other milks or vegetarian beverages for baby?

- Skim, 1% and 2% milk do not provide enough fat for baby to grow in the first 2 years.
- Soy beverages or rice beverages should not be used because they may not contain enough protein, fat or calories to help baby grow.
- Coffee whitener is not suitable for baby and should never be given to baby. It does not contain the nutrients baby needs.

Thank you to the registered dietitians, public health nurses, pediatricians, community nutritionists, community support workers and consumers in Manitoba who developed this resource and provided Alberta Health and Wellness permission to adapt and reproduce the resource.



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