

# Feeding Baby Infant Formula



Alberta

# Introduction

The guidelines in this book are for **healthy, full-term babies.**

**Breastfeeding is best for babies.** If you are supplementing breast milk or you are not breastfeeding, **iron-fortified infant formula** is the only other food that should be provided to baby for the first six months. Start feeding baby solid foods at six months and continue to feed formula to your baby until 9 to 12 months of age. Continue to provide a vitamin D supplement to breastfed babies who are only given small amounts of formula. Call Health Link Alberta if you have questions.

## Buying Formula

All formulas have to meet standards set by Health Canada.

Always buy infant formula that is **labeled “iron-fortified”** or **“added iron.”** Iron is important for brain development and for keeping baby healthy.

Nothing except iron-fortified, cow’s milk formula should be used unless you are told by a health care provider to use a different infant formula.



Sometimes containers look similar. Make sure you read the label carefully.

Three types of infant formula:	How to prepare	How to store after opening	How long can you store the container after opening it	How long can you store prepared formula
<b>Powder</b> Powder infant formula is not sterile. Follow the instructions on the can carefully.	Follow directions on can for amount of sterilized water* and number of scoops of powder	Covered in a cool, dark place	Less than 30 days	<b>Follow the storage instructions on the formula can.</b>
<b>Concentrated liquid</b>	Mix with equal parts sterilized water*	Covered in refrigerator	Less than 24 hours	
<b>Ready-to-use</b>	No mixing required	Covered in refrigerator	Less than 24 hours	

Check the expiry date on all packages.

### NEVER replace formula with:

- 1% or 2% or skim milk
- soy or rice beverages
- coffee whitener
- condensed or evaporated milk

### \*Sterilize the water

Until baby is four months old, **only use sterilized water** to mix with baby’s formula. Take cold water from the tap and bring it to a boil for two minutes. Boiled water can be stored in a covered sterile container for up to three days in the fridge, or 24 hours at room temperature.

If you **get your water from a well**, sterilization may not be enough to make it safe. Contact your community health centre to have the water safety tested. **Distilled** water is not sterilized water.



## Choosing a bottle and nipple

**Bottles for feeding babies come in many shapes and sizes.**

They are made out of plastic or glass. Be sure to check the bottle on a regular basis and throw them away if there are chips or cracks.

**Bottle nipples** are made from rubber, latex, or silicone and come in many different shapes.

**Nipples come in slow and fast speeds.** For the newborn infant, the slow flow nipple is preferred. You can use faster speed nipples as your baby gets older.

You can try out the different types of nipples to see which your baby prefers. If you have any questions, consult your health care professional.



### You should replace the nipple if:

- the formula comes out too quickly (formula should drip once per second when bottle is held upside down)
- the nipple has become discolored
- the nipple has become swollen
- the nipple looks cracked, is sticky or broken

## Sterilizing Equipment

**Sterilize** bottles, nipples, lids, measuring cups, mixing jug and any other equipment until baby is **at least 4 months old**.



To sterilize supplies, **completely cover items** with water in the pot.



Cover the pot and bring water to a boil. Continue to **boil for 2 minutes**.



Remove items with sterilized tongs.

**Questions?** Call Health Link Alberta. Calgary Health Region (403) 943-5465, Capital Health Region (780) 408-5465, or other Alberta health regions call toll-free 1-866-408-5465

# Preparing Formula



**Follow the directions on the formula container exactly.**

**Never add extra** formula or water. For ready-to-use formula, do not add any water.



Use a **sterilized bottle** for each feeding. You can make one or several bottles at a time. Ensure the formula can is clean and does not have any dents. Wash the lid of the formula can with a warm, clean cloth before opening.



Follow the storage instructions on the formula container for prepared formula. As a guide formula made from:

- Powder – use in 24 hours
- Concentrate – use in 48 hours
- Ready-to-use formula – use in 48 hours.



**When it's time for a feeding**, the formula should be warmed using hot tap water until it feels lukewarm (neither hot or cold).



**NEVER MICROWAVE THE BABY'S BOTTLE.**

Microwaving causes "hotspots" that may burn baby's mouth. **Do not microwave formula in plastic containers.**

## Amount of Formula to Prepare

**Your baby is unique.** This table is a guide to the amount of formula to prepare. Remember that your baby may eat more or less than the amounts indicated.

Baby's age	Number of bottles each day	Amount in each bottle (1 ounce = 30 ml)	Total amount in 24 hours
Birth to 2 weeks	6-10	2-3 ounces (60-90 ml)	12-30 ounces (360-900 ml)
3-8 weeks	6-8	3-4 ounces (90 - 120 ml)	18-32 ounces (540-960 ml)
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 (150-180 ml)	25-36 ounces (750-1080 ml)
5-7 months	5-6	5-6 ounces (150-180 ml)	25-36 ounces (750-1080 ml)
7-9 months	3-4	6-8 ounces (180-240 ml)	18-32 ounces (540-960 ml)
9-12 months	3-4	6-8 ounces (180-240 ml)	18-32 ounces (540-960 ml)

Once baby begins to eat more solid foods, baby will begin to drink less formula.

Do not be upset if baby does not drink all the formula prepared. **THROW OUT** any unused formula from the bottle.

# Feeding Baby



**Create a quiet and pleasant environment.** This will help you and baby to relax. Hold baby close or cuddle your baby.

**Try using different positions** to feed baby, such as holding your baby using different arms.

**Support baby's head** and hold it higher than the body. Hold the bottle for your baby so that formula fills the nipple. Burp your baby after each feeding.

Offer formula when baby shows signs of hunger. **Crying** is a late hunger cue.

## Signs of hunger

- Sucking motions
- Looking around
- Putting fist or fingers into their mouth
- Searching with an open mouth

## Signs of fullness

- Baby lets go of the bottle in a relaxed manner
- Swallows become few and far between
- Baby falls asleep

## **NEVER prop baby's bottle.**

Baby could choke. Holding baby while feeding is an important bonding time for you and baby.

## **NEVER let baby fall asleep with a bottle.**

This can cause baby's teeth to rot and increase the chance of ear infections.

## **Do not put juice in a bottle.**

Feeding baby juice is not necessary. 100% unsweetened juice should only be given to baby after six months, and in a cup.

## **Expect to feed baby every two to three hours during the first three months.**

Some babies may eat several times in a short period of time. As your baby gets older, the number of times per day that baby eats may decrease or increase with growth spurts.

**Your baby may be more hungry** at one meal and less hungry at another. Letting your baby guide the feedings will ensure baby is getting enough to eat.

## **All babies grow differently.**

Growth spurts usually occur at about two to three weeks, six weeks, three months and six months.

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# Any questions about:

## Bowel Movements

Within the first two days, baby will pass a sticky dark, almost black bowel movement. After this, the colour of baby's bowel movements can vary between light brown, yellow or green in colour. Baby's bowel movements should stick to the diaper. Baby's bowel movements will change as baby grows and especially once baby starts to eat solid foods. Do not focus on the number of times baby has a bowel movement as long as baby is content, eating well and growing. If you do have concerns, talk to your health care provider or call Health Link Alberta.

## Number of Wet Diapers

Baby's urine will be pale and have no odour. In the first few days, baby will have one to three wet diapers every day. After six days, baby should have six to eight heavy, wet diapers each day.

## Learning to Drink From a Cup

After six months you can begin to offer baby small amounts of water from a cup. This will help baby to learn to drink from a cup. Once baby can drink water from a cup you can start to feed baby formula from a cup. At 9 to 12 months baby can try whole fat (homogenized/3.25% MF) milk in a cup.

## Weaning From the Bottle

You can begin to wean baby from the bottle anywhere from six to nine months of age. Baby should be weaned from the bottle by 12 to 14 months of age.

## Baby's Teeth

Before baby's teeth appear, wipe baby's gums with a soft cloth. As soon as baby's first tooth appears, you can begin to brush baby's teeth twice a day and especially before bed. Use a small soft bristle toothbrush.

## Other Concerns with Formula Feeding

**If you suspect baby is having problems** with the formula you are feeding, contact your health care provider before changing formulas or giving baby anything else.

If you have a history of allergies in your family, consult with your health care provider. Specialty formulas may or may not be required.

It is normal for babies to spit up, have some gassiness and be fussy sometimes.

**Consult your health care provider** if baby is fussy most of the time and has one or more of the following:

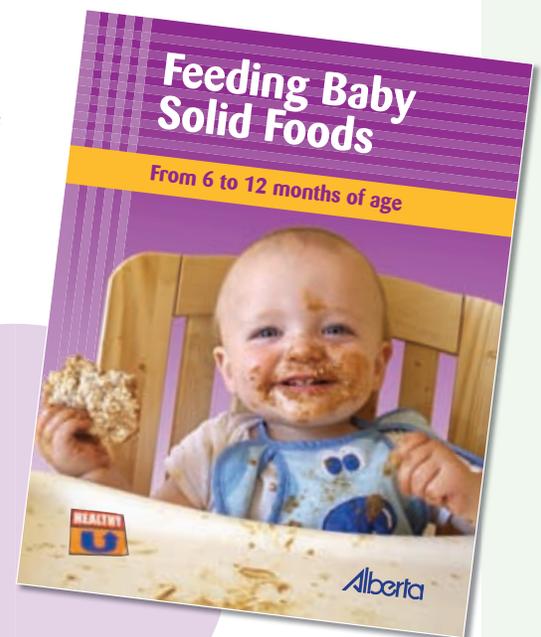
- Baby's bowel movements are hard (do not stick to the diaper)
- Baby is vomiting
- Baby has diarrhea (very watery stools)
- Baby has a rash
- Baby appears to be in pain
- Baby has a lot of gas
- Baby has blood or mucous in their diaper

## Offering other foods to baby

At 9 to 12 months, babies can be offered pasteurized, whole fat (homogenized/3.25% MF) milk once they are eating a variety of foods, including iron-rich choices at most meals.

Offer milk in a cup.

To learn about feeding baby solid foods pick up a copy of *Feeding Baby Solid Foods From 6 to 12 months of age* at your community health centre.



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# Call for help

**Health Link Alberta** offers nurse advice by telephone 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can call from anywhere in the province by dialing:

**Calgary Health Region 403-943-5465,  
Capital Health Region 780-408-5465,  
other Alberta health regions call  
toll-free 1-866-408-5465.**

