



## Feeding Your Baby Formula Safely Making and Storing Formula

Breastmilk is the only food your baby needs for the first 6 months of life. If you are having trouble breastfeeding your baby, contact your health care provider. You can also call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 to speak with a registered nurse or registered dietitian.

If you cannot give breastmilk to your baby, feed your baby a store bought (commercial) infant formula. Always follow the directions on the label when making the formula. If you don't, your baby may not grow well and could get sick.

Give your baby formula made from cow milk unless your health care provider tells you to use a different kind.

### What are the different types of infant formula?

There are 3 types of formula: ready-to-feed; concentrated liquid; and powdered.

Powdered formula is not sterile (free from germs). To keep your baby safe, it must be prepared exactly as listed on the container. Ready-to-feed and concentrated liquid formulas do not have any bacteria and are sterile until they are opened.

### What formula do I feed my baby?

You can feed your baby any type of formula if your baby is healthy and born at full term (37 weeks or more of pregnancy).

If your baby is 'high risk,' use either ready-to-feed or concentrated liquid formulas. If you cannot get liquid formula, you can use powdered formula.

Your baby is a 'high risk' baby if:

- Your baby was born before 37 weeks of pregnancy (premature) and is currently less than 2 months old.
- Your baby weighed less than 2500 grams at birth and is currently less than 2 months old.
- Your baby's immune system is weak, meaning they are more likely to get sick if exposed to germs.

If you are unsure if your baby is 'high risk' talk to your health care provider.

### How do I clean and sterilize the supplies I need to make formula?

Every time you make formula, you must clean and sterilize the bottles and tools used to make formula until your baby is at least 4 months old. Sterilize means to kill any germs

that could make your baby sick. To clean and sterilize bottles and tools, follow these steps:

1. Gather together the formula, cups, bottles, nipples, and spoons.
2. Wash your hands with soap and warm water.
3. Wash all bottles and tools in hot, soapy water and then rinse.
4. Place the clean supplies in a large pot.
5. Fill the pot with water until everything is covered with water.
6. Bring the water to a rolling boil.
7. Boil for 2 minutes.
8. Keep the supplies in the pot, and cover the pot with a lid until you are ready to make the formula.
9. If you don't use these items right away, use clean tongs to remove them from the pot and let them dry on a clean paper towel or cloth. When they are dry you can cover and store them in a clean place.

### How do I prepare and store ready-to-feed formula?

To prepare ready-to-feed formula follow the directions on the label.

Ready-to-feed formula does not need water. Pour the amount you think your baby will drink into a sterilized bottle. Do not pour out more than is needed. Throw out any formula left in the bottle if it is not used within 2 hours.

Cover and store the open container of formula in the fridge for up to 48 hours. Throw away any unused formula.

If the ready-to-feed formula has not been opened yet, store it in a cool dry place.

### How do I make and store concentrated liquid formula?

If the liquid concentrate formula has not been opened yet, store it in a cool, dry place.

Keep any open cans of liquid concentrate formula covered and stored in the fridge. It can be safely stored in the fridge for 48 hours.

Make 1 bottle at a time. This is the safest way to make formula.

To make liquid concentrate formula, follow these steps:

1. Boil water in a kettle or in a covered pot on the stove.
2. Bring the water to a rolling boil for 2 minutes. If you use a kettle, make sure it does not shut-off by itself as soon as the water starts to boil.
3. Let the boiled water cool to room temperature before mixing it with the formula.
4. Carefully measure and mix the formula, following the directions on the package.

If you make more than 1 bottle at a time, cool the bottles quickly by placing them in the fridge. Mixed formula can be stored safely in the fridge for up to 24 hours.

### How do I make and store powdered formula?

Once the powdered formula is open, store it with the lid tightly closed. It must be used within 1 month. When you first open the container, write the date on the lid to help you remember.

To make powdered baby formula, follow these steps:

1. Boil water in a kettle or in a covered pot on the stove.
2. Bring the water to a rolling boil for 2 minutes. If you use a kettle, make sure it does not shut-off by itself as soon as the water starts to boil.
3. Let the boiled water cool to no less than 70°C (158°F). Use a digital thermometer to check the temperature.
4. Follow the directions on the package to measure and mix the water and formula together.
5. Cool the formula to feeding temperature and use right away.

Make 1 bottle at a time. This is the safest way to make formula.

To safely store any baby formula, your fridge must be 4°C (39°F) or cooler. If you are not sure, use a fridge thermometer.

If you make more than 1 bottle at a time, cool the bottles quickly and store them in the fridge. Use the mixed formula within 24 hours.

### How do I get the formula to the right temperature to feed my baby?

If just made, powdered formula is too hot to feed to your baby. Cool it by putting the bottle: under cold running water, or in a bowl filled with cold water and ice.

Any formula stored in the fridge can be fed to your baby right out of the fridge or warmed first. Warm it by putting

the bottle under warm running water, or in a bowl of hot water for no more than 15 minutes.

Make sure the ring of the bottle and the nipple do not get wet from the tap water.

To test the temperature, shake the bottle 1 to 2 times and pour 3 to 5 drops of formula on the inside of your wrist. If the formula feels warm, but not hot, then you can feed it to your baby.

Do not warm formula in the microwave. Microwaves heat unevenly and create hot spots. Hot spots in the formula could burn your baby's mouth.

Once you start feeding your baby, that bottle must be used within 2 hours. Throw out any formula left in the bottle after 2 hours or your baby may get sick. Do not put any warmed formula left in the bottle back into the fridge.

### How can I feed my baby away from home?

If you plan to be away for 2 hours or less, place prepared formula in an insulated bag or cooler with an ice pack. Use this formula within 2 hours.

If you plan to be away from home for longer than 2 hours, the best option is to bring unopened ready-to-feed formula with you.

### For More Information

If you have any questions about feeding your baby, contact your local health unit or your health care provider. You can also call **8-1-1** to speak to a registered nurse or registered dietitian.

To learn more about infant formula, see:

- [HealthLinkBC File #69a Feeding Your Baby Formula: Before You Start](#)
- Healthy Canadians – Infant formula [www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/infant-care/infant-formula.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/infant-care/infant-formula.html).

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