

Bottlefeeding



Health
Promotion
Agency

Bottlefeeding

This leaflet contains new information that will help you to bottlefeed your baby as safely as possible.

This new advice is based on guidance from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Food Standards Agency. It may differ from what you have done before if you have older children, but to minimise any risk it is recommended that you follow the advice in this leaflet.

New safety advice

Parents need to be aware that powdered infant formula milk is not a sterile product. Even though they are sealed, tins or packets of milk powder can contain bacteria, such as *Enterobacter sakazakii* or *Salmonella*.

Infections caused by these bacteria in formula milk are very rare, but when they do happen they can be fatal. Low birth weight and premature babies, and babies under six weeks old are most at risk from these bacteria, but it's important to try to destroy the bacteria when making up formula milk for any baby. The bacteria can be destroyed by making up the milk with water at a temperature of around 70°C. In practice, this means boiling the kettle and leaving it to cool for **no longer than 30 minutes**.

Because it's impossible to destroy completely all the bacteria that may be present, it's always better to make up a fresh bottle for each feed. Bacteria multiply rapidly at room



temperature and can even survive and multiply slowly in the fridge, so storing formula milk for any length of time increases the risk of your baby becoming ill. (Unopened cartons of ready-to-feed formula can be stored, as the liquid milk has already been heat-treated to kill any bacteria.)

If you are likely to need a bottle in a hurry, pour freshly boiled water into a flask, seal it and use this to make fresh formula milk when necessary. This is safer than storing made-up formula milk in the fridge. Alternatively, you could use ready-to-feed liquid formula.

Cool the formula milk quickly by holding the bottle (with the cap covering the teat) under cold running water.

Always check the temperature before feeding it to your baby.

What's the risk?

Enterobacter sakazakii, a type of bacteria which can cause meningitis, has been found in between 4% and 14% of samples of powdered formula milk tested. Other harmful bacteria, such as *Salmonella*, have also been detected from time to time. These bacteria are only likely to cause illness if you don't follow the safety guidelines for making up formula milk.



The cleaning and sterilising instructions are the same, whether you are using expressed breastmilk or infant formula milk.

All the equipment you use for bottlefeeding your baby needs to be washed in hot soapy water, rinsed and then sterilised.

You need to keep sterilising your feeding equipment until your baby is at least six months old.

Methods of sterilising

Steam sterilising (electric or microwave)

Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Make sure the feeding equipment is thoroughly clean.

Place the bottle and teat into the steriliser with the open ends facing downwards.

Check the manufacturer's instructions to find out how long feeding equipment remains sterile in an unopened steriliser, as it varies from one make to another. It's best to sterilise equipment just before you want to use it.



Cold water chemical sterilising

Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Make sure the feeding equipment is thoroughly clean.

Make up new sterilising solution every 24 hours.

Place the bottles and teats in the solution. Make sure that no air bubbles are trapped by lowering the bottles in slowly so that they fill up with the sterilising solution.

Place a floating cover over the equipment to make sure that it remains submerged in sterilising solution.

Leave feeding equipment in the sterilising solution for at least 30 minutes before use.



Making up a bottle of infant formula milk

Fill the kettle with fresh water from the tap. Do not use bottled mineral water or artificially softened water.

Boil the kettle and leave it to cool for **no more than 30 minutes**. It is important that the water is still hot, otherwise any bacteria in the milk powder may not be destroyed. Always take care, as at 70°C water is still hot enough to scald.

Read the instructions on the tin or packet to find out how much water and milk powder you will need.

Before starting to make up the feed, wipe down the work surfaces you are going to use with a clean cloth.

Wash your hands with soap and hot water.



If the bottle has been sterilised using sterilising fluid, shake the bottle to remove any excess fluid from inside and outside the bottle. Or rinse the bottle using cooled boiled water from the kettle (not tap water).



If you have used a steam sterilising unit, remove the bottle from the unit.

Place the teat and cap in the lid of the steriliser, don't place them directly on the work surface.



Place the empty bottle on a clean flat surface and pour in the cooled boiled water up to the required mark.



Always pour the water into the bottle first and check that the water level is correct before adding the milk powder.





Loosely fill the scoop with milk powder and level it off with a plastic knife which has been sterilised.

Make sure you use the scoop which comes with that particular packet or tin of milk. Do not swap scoops from one milk brand to another - they may not be the same size.

Add the milk powder to the water. Ensure you add one scoop to 1 fl oz or 30ml of water. Never use more or less than this (unless recommended by a dietitian) or you will make your baby ill. Never add sugar or cereals to the bottle.



Cover the bottle with the supplied disc and screw ring. Shake well until all the powder is dissolved.



Remove the disc and holding the edge of the teat place it on the bottle. Place the screw ring over the top of the teat and tighten in place.

Feeding your baby

Before feeding expressed breastmilk or infant formula milk to your baby, always check the temperature of the milk by dropping a little onto the inside of your wrist. It should feel just warm to the touch (not hot).

If you need to cool the milk, hold the bottle under cold running water, with the cap covering the teat.

Never heat bottles in a microwave oven. The milk continues to heat up after it has been taken out of the microwave and could scald your baby.



If your baby doesn't finish the bottle within an hour, throw any left over milk away.

If you are bottlefeeding away from home or travelling with your baby, it is safest to take an individual pre-sealed carton of readymade formula milk. The next safest alternative is to carry a measured amount of milk powder in a small sterilised container, a flask of hot water which has been boiled and an empty sterilised feeding bottle. The flask used should be kept solely for this purpose.

The formula should then be made up immediately before it is needed. The water must still be hot when you use it, otherwise any bacteria in the milk powder may not be destroyed. Always put the water in first and then add the milk powder. Cool the formula to the required temperature in a jug of cold water.

Alternatively, when out and about you could use a carton of ready-to-feed milk.

Types of formula

Almost all baby milk powders are made from cow's milk which has been processed to make it suitable for babies.

Whey based milks (often called "first" milks) are more easily digested by a young baby. Casein based milks (these are sometimes called "second" milks or the carton may say "for hungrier babies") take longer to digest and are not recommended for young babies.

Follow-on milks should never be used for infants under six months old as they are not nutritionally suitable. It is not necessary to change to follow-on milk at six months.

Babies should not be fed ordinary cow's milk as a main drink until they are one year old.

Do not use soya or goat's milk infant formula without advice from a doctor or dietitian.



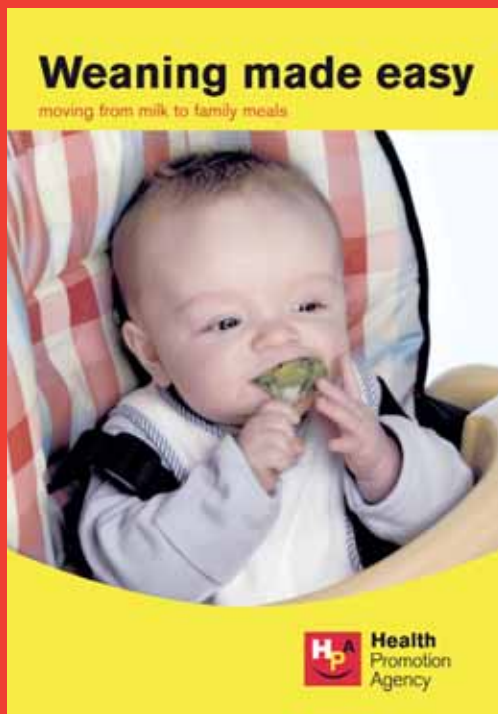
Anti-reflux formula has to be made up differently from other types of formula. If your baby needs an anti-reflux formula, please ask your health visitor for advice.

Weaning

The recommended age for weaning babies is six months. All the nourishment your baby needs for the first six months comes from either breastmilk or infant formula milk.

Once you start weaning, carry on breast and/or bottlefeeding your baby alongside introducing solid foods.

For more information, ask your health visitor for a copy of the leaflet *Weaning made easy: moving from milk to family meals*.



Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby and it doesn't cost anything. If you use formula milk, it is very important for your baby's health that you follow all instructions carefully. It is possible, but difficult, to reverse a decision not to breastfeed or to re-start breastfeeding once you have stopped. Introducing partial bottlefeeding will reduce a mother's breastmilk supply. Breastfeeding mothers don't need to eat any special foods but, just like everyone else, they are advised to eat a healthy diet.



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Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland

18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast BT2 8HS.

Tel: 028 9031 1611 (Voice/Minicom) Fax: 028 9031 1711.

www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk