

San Maternity

Preparing Infant Formula

Patient Information Handout

Reviewed September 2023

Preparing Infant Formula at home

Formula must be prepared according to the instructions on the tin. Use utensils that are clean and sterilise all equipment for the first 12 months. Incorrectly prepared formula, unboiled water and unsterilised equipment can make a baby ill.

Equipment you will need to formula feed:

- Formula
- Boiled water
- Sterilised bottles
- Bottle Brush
- Detergent
- Sterilisation equipment (see below for options)

Preparing to make a formula feed

Before making formula check the expiry date. Tins of opened formula must be used within the time frame specified on the tin. For example, many formulas must be used within one month of opening.

Read the instructions on the tin of formula. These instructions tell you the correct number scoops of formula and amount of water to use. Level off each scoop of formula. **DO NOT** add half scoops or more scoops than stated in the instructions as this may make your baby ill.

It is best to make formula fresh each feed. Some parents choose to make formula ahead of time. If you choose to do this you must refrigerate the formula below 5°C within 1 hour of making it and use it within 24 hours.

The feeding table on the formula tin is a guide to how much formula your baby may need. Your baby may need more or less than indicated. Ask your midwife or early childhood health nurse can help you determine how much your baby will need as they grow.

Making up a formula feed

1. Wash and dry your hands before preparing formula.
2. Prepare formula on a clean surface
3. Empty and refill kettle with fresh tap water, then boil and let it cool before use. This takes around 30minutes. If using refrigerated boiled water, you can warm the water by standing it in a container of warm water.
4. Pour the water into the bottle first.
5. Add the number of levelled scoops of formula required. Always use the measuring scoop provided in the tin being used as scoop sizes differ between formulas. Do not wash the formula scoop after use.
6. Put the teat and lid on the bottle. Tap the bottom of the bottle gently so the powder falls into the water then. Swirl the bottle gently then shake so the powder and water are thoroughly mixed.
7. Before feeding your baby, test the temperature of the formula by placing a few drops on the inside of your wrist. Make sure the formula is not too hot – it should feel slightly warm.

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Cleaning equipment

1. Discard leftover formula.
2. Discard any bottles with cracks or chips as bacteria grow in these.
3. Rinse all parts under running water.
4. Wash all parts in warm, soapy water using a clean bottle brush.
5. Squeeze soapy water through the teat holes.
6. Rinse all parts under running water and squeeze water through teat holes again.
7. Equipment is now ready to sterilise.

Sterilising equipment

Equipment needs to be sterilised until your baby is 12 months old to prevent illness. Sterilised equipment can be stored in a clean, sealed container in the fridge for up to 24 hours. Re-sterilise any unused equipment after 24 hours.

There are 3 main forms of sterilisation as outlined below

Boiling water:

- Place washed equipment in a large saucepan.
- Cover with water, ensuring all equipment is submerged with no air bubbles.
- Bring the water to the boil and boil for five minutes.
- Allow the equipment to cool in the saucepan. After parts are cool, remove them with clean tongs or clean hands to avoid burns.
- Shake off excess water.

Microwave steam steriliser or electric steam steriliser

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Steam can cause burns so ensure you wait until equipment is cool before removing.
- Note you **cannot** put bottles directly into the microwave without a steriliser. They will melt and may cause a fire.

Chemical disinfection method

- Disinfect your equipment in an antibacterial chemical solution that comes as tablets or a concentrated liquid as per manufacturer's instructions.

Preparing formula when you're away from home

The safest way to transport formula is to take cooled, boiled water and the powdered formula in separate containers and mix just prior to feeding.

If you need to transport bottles of formula that are already made up, make sure the formula is icy cold when you leave the house. Carry it in a thermal baby bottle pack or a cool bag with icepacks and use it within 2 hours of it being made.

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Warming and cooling infant formula

There is no need to warm formula if your baby doesn't mind chilled formula. It is safe.

Many babies like their formula warmed a little before drinking. A safe way to do this is to stand formula in a container of warm water. Bottle warmers are also a convenient and safe option. Formula should not be warmed for more than 10 minutes as this may cause bacteria to start to grow.

After warming, swirl the formula to ensure it is evenly heated. Test the temperature of the formula by putting a few drops onto your wrist. If the formula is too hot, cool it by running the bottle under running water and check the temperature again before feeding it to your baby.

DO NOT use a microwave to heat formula as they heat unevenly and may cause burns to your baby's mouth and throat.

For more information:

Your Midwife, Child and Family Health Nurse, or Lactation Consultant

Australian Breastfeeding Association

p: 1800 686 268

w: www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Raising Children Network

w: www.raisingchildren.net.au

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