



Bottle-Feeding Your Baby

If you decide not to breastfeed, or you are unable to breastfeed, feeding your baby with a commercial iron fortified formula is a good substitute. Be well informed, use your own best judgment, consult with your WIC Nutritionist and your doctor, and don't let anyone – however well-meaning – make you feel guilty for bottle feeding.

Tips on bottle-feeding

Mix baby's formula following the directions on the can. It is important to mix formula right to keep your baby healthy. Infant formula with iron is best. The public water is generally safe to use. If you have well water or have concerns about your town water supply, ask the WIC staff.

Hold your baby close when feeding. Give your baby lots of love and attention during feeding. Don't prop the bottle or lay baby down with a bottle. It can cause choking and ear infections.

Burp your baby after about half the bottle and again at the end of feeding. Some babies may need to burp more often.

Bottles are for formula and plain water only. Sugar water, Karo syrup, juice, Kool-Aid, soda, or teas do not belong in your baby's bottle.

Cereal should not be added to the bottle. It does not help babies sleep any longer and may cause allergies or choking.

How much should I feed my baby?

Newborn babies have small tummies. They drink small amounts of breastmilk or formula at each feeding and need to eat often. As babies grow, they will drink more at each feeding and may want to feed less often. Let your baby decide how much to eat. The following guide may help your get started.

- A baby in his first month may drink 1-2 ounces every 2-3 hours
- 1-2 month old may drink 2-3 ounces every 2-3 hours
- 2-3 month old may drink 4-5 ounces every 3-4 hours
- 3-4 month old may drink 5-6 ounces every 3-4 hours

Babies do not always get hungry on a schedule and do not always take the same amount at a feeding. You need to be flexible. It is OK for your newborn baby to sleep one 5-hour period at night before the next feeding. As babies grow, they will sleep longer.

Remember: **Hold your baby for all feedings. Don't put baby to bed with a bottle.**

Keeping Formula Safe

Always wash your hands before making or feeding formula.

Keep formula in the refrigerator after mixing. A bottle of formula left at room temperature for more than 1 hour can make your baby sick.

If you will be away from home and need to bring formula that you have already mixed, put the bottle in a cooler with ice packs. If you use powdered formula, mix one bottle at a time as you need it.

To warm a cold bottle of formula, put it in a pan of warm water. Before feeding, shake the bottle well and sprinkle a little formula on your wrist to be sure it is not too hot.

Do not heat the bottle in a microwave oven. Heating a bottle in a microwave can cause hot spots that can burn your baby's mouth.

Throw away any formula left in the bottle after feeding.

I feed my baby infant formula, and he spits up all the time. Should I change formula?

Almost all babies spit up some, especially as newborns. Before you change the formula: Read the label and make sure you are mixing the formula right. Call your WIC office if you are not sure how to mix the formula properly.

Burp your baby after every 1 to 2 ounces of formula.

Try feeding your baby in an upright position for about half an hour before lying him down flat. An infant seat or car seat works well for this.

If these ideas don't help, talk to your baby's doctor to find out if you should be concerned, and help identify why your baby is spitting up.

How should I wash my baby's bottle?

To wash bottle by hand: Wash bottles in hot, soapy water. Use a bottlebrush to clean the inside and nipples. Rinse in clear water. Boil in a large pan of water for 5 minutes. Place bottles and nipples on a clean towel to dry.

To wash in a dishwasher: Rinse bottles well with hot water. Use a bottlebrush if needed. Wash and let dry in the dishwasher.

Throw nipples away when they become sticky.

What should I know about feeding my 2-6 month old baby?

When your baby is 2 or 3 months old, he begins to learn about love. He watches, smiles, jabbers, and reaches out to get your attention and to keep you close. Pay attention to the information coming from your baby to guide feeding. This shows him you love him and teaches him to love you back. Don't worry about spoiling him. You can't spoil a tiny baby. Continue to feed on demand. Wait until he is near six months to start solids, then start based on what your baby can do, not on how old he is.

Around 4-6 months of age, most babies will have good head and neck control and will be able to sit up with support. Babies need to be able to do both of these things in order to be ready to try solid foods.

Feed your baby when he wants to eat, when he is wide awake and calm.

Make your baby's first food iron-fortified rice cereal. Start by offering 1-2 teaspoons of cereal mixed with enough breastmilk or formula to make a thin mixture. Let him eat his way – much or little, fast or slowly, steady or start-and-stop.

After introducing a new food, continue to feed your baby the new food every day, but do not give your baby another new food for that week. Watch your baby to see if there are any signs of an allergic reaction, such as a rash, more spitting up than usual, vomiting, wheezing, or diarrhea. If you see any of these signs, stop feeding the new food and contact your baby's doctor.

Bring him to the table with you when you eat. He loves being with you, and he begins learning what eating is all about.

Start solids when he can sit up, open his mouth when he sees something coming, and close his lips over the spoon.

Talk or play awhile after feeding. Put him to bed when he's calm and drowsy and let him put himself to sleep.

After your baby has gotten used to rice cereal, try other cereals (like oatmeal) as a new food.

After your baby has tried different cereals, try a cooked strained vegetable as the new food for the week. Most babies like the orange vegetables (like sweet potatoes or squash).

After your baby has gotten used to some vegetables, try a cooked strained fruit (like applesauce or pears) as the new food for the week.

Continue to feed your baby breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula until the first birthday. This continues to be your baby's major source of nutrition, even though you have started feeding solid foods.

Your baby will eat as much as he needs and grow in the way that is right for him if you maintain a division of responsibility in feeding. You are responsible for the what of feeding – breastmilk or formula. Your baby is responsible for everything else – when, where, how much, how fast.

What should I know about feeding my 6- to 12-month-old baby?

You are still responsible for the what of feeding – breastmilk or formula, solid foods. The when and where of feeding is now beginning to change to your responsibility as well. Your baby is still responsible for how much and how fast she chooses to eat. Continue to watch your baby for signs of hunger and fullness, and respect her cues.

Now is the time to let your baby start to learn to feed herself. Around 7 to 8 months, give your baby small pieces of food to pick up and eat with his fingers. Crackers and small pieces of well-cooked vegetables work well.

You can begin to train your baby to expect a 3-meal-per-day schedule. Bring your baby to the table when you eat. Family meals are a time for your baby to learn to socialize with everyone.

Babies need more than 3 meals per day, so you can feed your baby a small snack in between meals and before bedtime. Use good foods as snack items: small pieces of soft fresh fruit or vegetables, whole-grain crackers, or cereals make good snacks.

Remember, all babies need to learn how to feed themselves. When they are learning, they will make a mess! Some babies need to "feel" foods before they are willing to try eating them. Be patient!

Keep it simple! Your baby needs to learn how each new food tastes by itself. Choose plain foods, not combinations (like casseroles).

Variety is important! Once your baby has tried a lot of different foods and has not had any reactions to them, offer different plain vegetables and fruits each day. Feed your baby the "colors of the rainbow." Continue to offer just one new food each week.

Now is the time to teach your baby to drink from a cup! Give your baby a small cup of water with meals.

Use a cup without a cover. Sippy cups are simply a bottle replacement and do not really teach the new skill of cup drinking.

This is a new process for your baby, so expect spills. Water does not result in a mess when spilled, so it is a good training beverage.

When your baby has learned to use the cup with water, you can begin to put a small amount of breastmilk or formula in it at meals and snacks.

Wait until your baby is 12 months before you offer 100 percent fruit juice. If your baby drinks from a bottle, only put breastmilk, formula or water in it. Do not put juice in a bottle.

By 12 months, your baby's food at mealtimes should be the same as what you eat. Make sure to include your baby in family meals.

Avoid foods that can choke your baby. Foods such as peanuts, popcorn, hot dogs, raw vegetables, whole grapes, raisins and hard candy are foods that can get stuck in her throat.

Sweet drinks like soda and juice drinks, and sweet foods are not foods your baby needs. Your baby is still eating small amounts of foods, and these will cause tooth decay and fill your baby up without giving your baby the nutrition she needs.

For more about feeding your baby (and for research backing up this advice), see [Ellyn Satter's Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense](#), Bull Publishing, 2000. Also see www.EllynSatter.com to purchase books and to review comprehensive educational materials that teach stage-related feeding and solve feeding problems.

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