Safe Formula Preparation (ready-to-feed formula)

- We think that ready-to-feed formula is the safest choice for formula until your baby is about 2 months of age. It is rare, but there can be bacteria that grows in powdered formula, once it is opened, that make babies very sick. Some experts recommend making powdered infant formula with very hot water, but this is a lot of work and some babies might get burned. Ready-to-feed formula is a liquid, premixed formula that can be bought at the grocery store or other convenience stores.
- At UC San Diego Medical Center, we use Good Start formula, but any term formula with iron can be used: Enfamil, Similac, Gerber, Earth's Best, Kirkland Brand, etc.
- If your family has a history of Type 1 Diabetes or cow's milk allergy, you might want to consider starting your baby on a hypoallergenic formula: Alimentum, Nutramigen, or Pregestimil.
- To warm ready-to-feed formula, run warm tap water over the bottle or place it in a pan of hot (not boiling) water. Shake the bottle occasionally while warming. Test the formula temperature before feeding. It should not feel hot or cold when dropped on your wrist. Do not use the microwave to warm formula, serious burns may result.
- Opened formula that is not used immediately should be stored in the refrigerator and used within 24 hours.

How to Bottle Feed a Newborn

Which Bottles/Nipples to Buy

Bottles and nipples come in many different shapes and types. Ask your health care provider and other mothers for their recommendations. You may need to experiment with different nipples to find the one your baby likes. If your baby seems to be gagging or gulping too fast, the nipple hole may be too large. If your baby is sucking hard and seems frustrated, the hole may be too small. As your baby grows you may need to adjust the size of the nipple.

How to Clean the Bottles and Nipples

Read the package insert on cleaning instructions before their first use; from then on, wash with hot soapy water or in the top rack of a dishwasher. A bottle and nipple brush is helpful for thoroughly cleaning the nipple and bottle.

How Much to Feed Your Baby

After the first few days of life, most newborns eat about 2 to 4 ounces (oz.) of formula every 2 to 4 hours. This amount may vary based on your baby’s weight and if he was born prematurely. Ask your health care provider for his recommendations for how many ounces of formula to offer at each feeding and how often. Remember, babies cry for reasons other than hunger, such as being cold, wet, lonely, or needing to burp.
Never leave your baby alone with a bottle propped up for him to drink.

You do not need to always finish the bottle. If baby falls into a deep sleep near the end of the feeding, but has not finished the bottle, stop the feeding and throw away the unused portion. You can allow baby to suck on your fingertip for a few minutes for comfort.

**Burping**

Allow your baby the chance to burp frequently. Some babies require a lot of burping, others little or none. If your baby doesn't burp in a few minutes, continue with the feeding. A newborn bottle-fed baby should have the opportunity to burp after every one-half to one ounce of formula. Some babies do not burp immediately and may need to be put in several positions for burping.

**Paced Bottle Feeding (for babies who need extra help with flow)**

With paced bottle feeding, your baby will be able to determine how quickly or slowly he/she eats by controlling the flow of milk. Paced feeding is needed when your newborn sucks without pausing and ends up with too much milk in his mouth.

To begin, hold your baby in a slightly upright position that is comfortable for you. Your baby’s head should be aligned with rest of his body. Touch the nipple of the bottle to baby’s lips until he opens his mouth. Wait for the baby to open wide and put the nipple in his mouth. Make certain that the nipple is all the way, on top of his tongue, so he’ll suck in as little air as possible. While he is eating, keep the bottle parallel to the ground.

Allow your baby to suck 5-10 times, and then gently pull the bottle out of his mouth, but keeping it so that it is touching his lower lip. This will allow your baby to suck the nipple back in when he is ready for more. If your baby gets upset when you pull the bottle out of his mouth, you can also tilt the bottle so that the flow lessens to give him a rest. When he starts sucking harder to get more milk, you can tilt it back up again to help quicken the flow a little bit.

Follow your baby's cues. If he is slowing down his pace and resting more, then let him finish at his own pace. Allow your baby to stop eating when he is full and take breaks along the way. There should always be a small amount of milk left in the bottle at the end of the feed.

*The time you spend feeding your baby is not only important for healthy growth and development but is also an important time of bonding.*