

# FORMULA FEEDING BASICS

*Safety, preparation, and storage  
information for feeding your baby*



# Before preparing infant formula, follow these steps:

1. Make sure the formula is not expired and the container is in good condition. (No dents, puffy ends, or rust spots.) Rinse the tops of cans before opening.
2. Clean the countertops and wash your hands with soap and warm water. Use a clean bottle and nipple.
3. Use water from a safe source to mix with formula. Cold tap water is usually safe but contact your local health department if you are not sure. Never use hot tap water to prepare infant formula.
4. Always follow the instructions and use the correct amount of water when preparing formula. Using too much or too little water can be harmful and make your baby sick.
5. Never microwave prepared formula or breastmilk. This can create hot spots in the bottle and burn your baby's mouth. If you need to warm up a bottle, place it under warm running water or in a bowl of warm water.
6. Separate and wash bottles, bottle parts, and nipples thoroughly after each use in hot soapy water in a separate container (not in the sink). Rinse thoroughly and air dry on a clean towel.

**If your baby is younger than 2 months, born prematurely, or has a weakened immune system,** check with their health care provider if you need to take extra precautions by boiling the water before you prepare powdered infant formula.

## Safety tips for using boiled water

Boil the water and let it cool in an open container for 5 minutes. Then continue with the steps listed under **Powdered Formula Instructions**. After preparing the formula, it will still be too hot to feed your baby. Put the cap on the bottle and cool it under running cold water until it reaches body temperature so that you don't burn your baby's mouth. Always test the formula on your arm before feeding your baby. It should feel warm, not hot.

Visit [www.cdc.gov/cronobacter/prevention](http://www.cdc.gov/cronobacter/prevention) to learn more.



## Powdered Formula Instructions

1. Use the exact amount of water and formula listed on the instructions of the infant formula container. **Always measure the water first and then add the infant formula powder.**

For example:

- 2 oz. water + 1 scoop powder = 2 oz. prepared formula
- 4 oz. water + 2 scoops powder = 4 oz. prepared formula
- 6 oz. water + 3 scoops powder = 6 oz. prepared formula

If mixing a large amount in a container:

- 29 oz. water + 1 cup powder = 32 oz. prepared formula

2. Shake infant formula in the bottle to mix. Do not stir.
3. Always cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

## Concentrated Formula Instructions

1. To open concentrated formula cans, use a clean can opener. Pour concentrated formula into a clean container.
2. Fill the empty can to the top with cold water and add to the same container and stir well. For example:
  - 1 can (13 oz.) concentrated formula + 1 can (13 oz.) water = 26 oz. prepared formula
3. Pour mixed formula into bottles, or leave in a covered container, and store in the refrigerator until ready to use and feed to baby within 24 hours.
4. Unmixed formula can be stored in a covered can in the refrigerator and should be discarded after 48 hours.

## Specialty Formula Instructions

For specialty formulas, follow the instructions given by your health care provider.



# Safely using and storing infant formula

- Use prepared infant formula within **1 hour** from when a feeding begins and within **2 hours** of preparation.
- If you do not start to use the prepared infant formula within **2 hours**, immediately store the bottle in the fridge and use it within **24 hours**.
- **Throw out any infant formula that is left in the bottle after feeding your baby.** Do not refrigerate it to save for later; the combination of infant formula and your baby's saliva can cause bacteria to grow.





## Tips for feeding your baby

- Listen to your baby's feeding cues.
  - When your baby is hungry, they may bring their hands to their mouth, become more alert or active, suck on their hands or smack their lips, or open and close their mouth.
  - When your baby is full, they may turn away from the bottle, close their lips or fall asleep. If this happens, stop the feeding, even if the bottle isn't empty.
- Newborns need to be fed small amounts often during the day and night because their stomachs cannot hold large amounts of liquid. The amount babies drink changes as they grow older.
- Newborns should start with a one-hole nipple and progress to more holes as the baby gets older and develops a stronger suck. Cutting, enlarging, or adding holes may cause choking, overfeeding or excessive intake of air, which can lead to gas or colic.
- Hold your baby close during a feeding. Never prop the bottle or put them to bed with a bottle.
- Hold your baby in an upright position and place the bottle at a slight angle so that the liquid will only come out when your baby sucks. This allows them to better control how much they drink.
- Burp your baby halfway through a feeding or after every ounce and again when the feeding is over. Burping can help reduce spit up and make your baby more comfortable by getting the air out of their stomach.

# How much formula does your baby need?

Here's a guide based on their age:

Age	Amount
0-1 months	15-27 ounces/day
2-3 months	25-37 ounces/day
4-5 months	32-42 ounces/day
6-8 months	21-30 ounces/day
9-12 months	24-33 ounces/day



WIC is a supplemental program and may not provide the full amount of formula your baby needs at every stage. For babies who are not breastfed, infant formula is the best source of nutrition in the first year of life. When making formula, never add more water than what is recommended, as this can harm your baby. If you are unable to access enough formula, talk with the WIC staff or your health care provider about other resources that may help.

[www.mass.gov/wic](http://www.mass.gov/wic)



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