

Maternity

Responsive bottle feeding your baby

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire promotes breastfeeding as the healthiest way to feed your baby. If you decide not to breastfeed it is important that you are aware of the following increased risks for you and your baby:

- Cow's milk allergy
- Gut infections
- Diabetes
- Reduced milk supply due to less breastfeeding opportunities
- Obesity



Patient Information

If you have decided not to breastfeed or have stopped, it is possible to restart. You can feed your baby expressed breastmilk with a bottle. Through regular breastmilk removal and stimulation, the supply can be increased again to meet your baby's needs. Please speak to your midwife about this.

If you have made an informed decision to formula feed, we encourage you to give your baby their first feed in unrestricted skin to skin contact. This promotes a strong, loving relationship between you and your baby and helps with bonding. Holding your baby in skin to skin regulates the baby's temperature, heart rate, breathing, glucose levels and helps them to adapt to life outside of the womb.

Important note

If you have chosen to formula feed, please be aware that at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire we cannot store opened bottles of formula in our fridges or provide formula milk.

All patients who choose to formula feed will need to bring 'First milk starter packs' into hospital with them which contain 6x70ml bottles with teats.

What infant formula should I choose?

It is recommended you use a first infant formula throughout the first year. The brand does not matter because they are all similar.

How long do I use first infant formula for?

Use a first infant formula throughout the first year. When your baby is 6 months old, you can use small amounts of pasteurised whole cow's milk when cooking and preparing foods. Tap water is fine for infants over 6 months.

There is no need for follow-on formula. When your baby is one year old, they can use full fat cows' milk as their main milk drink.

Hungry baby or anti-colic milks

There is no evidence that these milks help babies to settle better or sleep longer. Unless your doctor gives you different advice, you do not need to use these milks.

What is responsive bottle feeding?

Responsive feeding is an important opportunity to help your baby's brain to grow and help them to feel safe and secure. It has the following benefits:

- It avoids overfeeding which causes obesity in later life
- It makes switching between the breast and bottle easier and reduce air intake which is a cause of colic
- It improves bonding and attachment
- It improves your baby's hand eye co-ordination and enhances their eye development

How do I use paced feeding for my baby?

- Your baby should be held semi-upright, skin to skin for close contact to encourage bonding.
- The bottle should be held horizontally, just filling the teat with milk. The top of the teat should be placed below the nose to let your baby invite the teat in as with a breastfeed
- Do not force the teat into your baby's mouth
- If your baby is drinking too fast, tip the bottle down or remove it to slow the pace of the feed - your baby should never be forced to finish a bottle
- If you switch and hold your baby on the other side halfway through the feed, it enhances hand-eye co-ordination
- Look at your baby. Talk and stroke them whilst feeding to improve your baby's brain, social and emotional development
- Don't worry if they take more milk one feed than another
- Limit the number of people who feed your baby so that baby stays calm and relaxed

Patient Information

Cold water sterilisation

- Wash your hands
- Clean bottles and teats in hot soapy water using a brush
- Rinse all equipment in cold running water before sterilisation
- Change the sterilising solution every 24 hours
- Equipment should be plunged into the solution for at least 30 minutes

Steam sterilisation

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions
- All equipment should be faced down
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how long the equipment may be left in the sterilising unit before use
- Steam sterilising bags re-used in the hospital

Key points

- Always discard any leftover milk
- If using infant formula, only make up a feed when your baby needs it
- There is no need to offer follow-on formula. The baby needs first milk for the first year of life
- Bottled water is not recommended for making a feed - it is not sterile and contains high salt levels
- If using ready to feed liquid infant formula - once opened, store in the back of the fridge and follow package instructions

Making up a formula feed safely

- Fill the kettle with cold fresh tap water – do not use previously boiled water and boil the water
- Leave to cool for no longer than 30 minutes to ensure the water temperature remains at 70 degrees
- Disinfect work surfaces and wash your hands

Patient Information

- Put the water in the bottle first while it is hot before adding the powdered infant formula. Double check the water level is correct
- If using cold water steriliser, shake off excess solution or rinse the equipment with cool boiled water from the kettle
- Stand the bottle on a clean surface. Avoid putting the teat and caps on work surfaces
- Loosely fill the scoop with powdered formula - according to the manufacturer's instructions and level it off using the flat edge of the leveller provided
- Holding the edge of the teat, put it on the bottle. Screw the ring on to the bottle
- Cover the teat with the cap and shake the bottle until the powder is dissolved
- It is important to cool the formula, so it is not too hot to drink. Hold the bottom half of the bottle under cold running water. Move the bottle under the tap to ensure even cooling. Make sure the water does not touch the cap covering the teat
- Test the temperature of the formula on the inside of your wrist before giving it to your baby - it should be body temperature, which means it should feel warm but not hot.
- Discard any formula left over after the feed
- Hold baby close during feeds, never leave baby unattended and never prop your baby up using a pillow or the bottle

How do I know if my baby is getting enough?

Your baby's weight gain and the number of wet and dirty nappies will help to tell you if your baby is getting enough infant formula. A few days after the birth, your baby should be producing around six wet nappies a day. These nappies should be heavy with clear or pale-yellow urine.

Useful contact numbers

Coventry Infant Feeding Support Team – 0790 4984 620
breastfeedingsupport@coventry.gov.uk

La Leche League 0845 120 2918

National childbirth trust 0300 330 0771

Patient Information

Further resources

Better Health Start for Life A guide to bottle feeding

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/10/Bottle-feeding-leaflet.pdf>

First Steps Nutrition

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/parents-carers>

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 6580 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:

www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback



Document History

Department:	Maternity
Contact:	26580
Updated:	January 2023
Review:	January 2025
Version:	7
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1174/11