

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



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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, stimulation and skin to skin 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 and brain development. 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 in ingredients.

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.

What is responsive bottle feeding?

Responsive feeding is an important opportunity to get know and learn to love your baby it helps your baby's brain to grow and helps them to feel safe and secure. Babies feel more secure if most feeds are given by parents/primary caregivers especially in the early weeks and months. Responsive bottle feeding has the following benefits:

- It avoids overfeeding which is linked to obesity in later life
- It makes switching between the breast and bottle easier and reduces 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 and brain development

How do I use responsive feeding for my baby?

- Feed your baby when they show feeding cues, this can include baby moving their head, opening their mouth and sucking on their fingers. Crying is the last sign for being hungry so try to feed your baby before they cry.
- Your baby should be held semi-upright, skin to skin encouraging eye contact and talking to your baby will reassure them. It can be useful to alternate the side you hold your baby for feeding.
- Invite baby to open their mouth by rubbing the teat against the upper lip. Allow your baby to draw the teat further back into the mouth, hold the bottle horizontally just filling the teat with milk to prevent milk from flowing too fast.
- 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
- Watch your baby and follow cues for when they need a break these can include milk spilling out of their mouth, splaying their fingers and toes, stop sucking or turning their head and pushing the bottle away. Gently remove the teat or bring the bottle downwards to stop the milk flow.
- Look at your baby. Talk and stroke them whilst feeding to improve your baby's brain, social and emotional development

Patient Information

- Don't worry if they take more milk one feed than another, babies are great at knowing how much milk they need at each feed.

Making up a formula feed safely

- Fill the kettle with at least 1 litre of 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
- Clean and disinfect work surfaces and wash your hands
- 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 retaining ring, 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, make up feeds as your baby needs them one at a time.
- Hold baby close during feeds, never leave baby unattended and never prop your baby up using a pillow or the bottle

How to sterilise feeding equipment

The following instructions apply to all feeding equipment used for feeding your baby whether you are using expressed breastmilk or first infant formula.

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Clean the work surfaces with hot, soapy water.
- Check the bottle and teat are not damaged, clean the bottle and teat in hot, soapy water with a clean bottle brush. Dishwashers clean bottle feeding equipment but do not sterilise it.
- Rinse all equipment in clean, cold running water before sterilising.

Cold water sterilisation

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions
- Make sure there is no air trapped in bottles or teats when putting them in the sterilising solution
- Change the sterilising solution every 24 hours
- Equipment should be plunged into the solution for at least 30 minutes and kept under the solution with a floating cover

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 can be re-used in the hospital please check with the midwife

Ready to feed formula

Ready to feed formula is safer than powder infant formula, it is sterile until opened. All feeding equipment still needs sterilising. Once opened any unused formula that remains in the carton needs to be stored at the back of the fridge on the top shelf with the cut corner turned down for up to 24 hours.

Key points

- Always discard any leftover milk
- If using infant formula only make up a feed when your baby needs it to reduce the risk of making your baby ill
- Unused bottles of infant formula should be discarded if they have been kept at room temperature for 2 hours or more
- There is no need to offer follow-on formula. The baby needs first milk for the first year of life
- Bottled mineral water is not recommended for making a feed - it is not sterile and contains high salt levels

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. Please ask your midwife for further information

Useful contacts

Coventry Infant Feeding Support Team: 0790 4984 620 (Mon- Fri 9am-5pm)

<https://linktr.ee/coventryift>

Warwickshire SWFT Infant Feeding Support Team:

swg-tr.breastfeedingnorth@nhs.net

<https://linktr.ee/nhswarwickshirebreastfeeding>

National Breastfeeding Helpline - Tel: +44(0)300 100 0212 (09:00am to 09:00pm)

NCT Breastfeeding Helpline - Tel: +44(0)300 330 0700 (08:00am to 10:00pm)

The Breastfeeding Network Support line - Tel: +44(0)300 100 0210

La Leche League Helpline - Tel: +44(0)845 120 2918

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers - Tel: +44(0)8444 122 949

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 A simple guide to infant formula, follow on formula and other infant milk

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59f75004f09ca48694070f3b/t/66a922686cba9b3d7526d721/1722360425292/Infant+milks+a+simple+guide_July24_final.pdf

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

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