



London Health Sciences Centre

Patient Information

FORMULA PREPARATION

It is important to get all the facts before deciding to feed your baby formula. That way you can make an informed decision. When feeding formula, use an iron fortified cow's milk formula. When adding water to formula, using too little or too much water can make your baby very sick. Always follow the package directions.

Water for Formula Preparation

Sterilized tap water should be used to make infant formula. Do not use carbonated or mineral water to make formula. Distilled water is not recommended. Put cold tap water in a pot on the stovetop and let it boil hard and bubble for 2 minutes to get rid of germs. Sterilized water can be stored in a covered pot at room temperature for 24 hours or covered in the fridge for 2-3 days. Always use sterilized water when preparing formula, even for the older baby.

Well Water

Well water should be tested regularly for bacterial and chemical contamination. Water that has tested safe can be used to make infant formula. Always sterilize well water as long as you offer formula to your baby. If your well water is unsafe, use ready to feed formula or formula made with bottled water that has been sterilized. For information contact MLHU Environmental Health at 519-663-5317 ext. 2300 or visit www.healthunit.com.

Cleaning & Sterilizing Equipment

Wash all equipment with a brush in hot, soapy water. Rinse well. Throw out any feeding equipment that is worn (e.g. sticky) or damaged (e.g. cracked). Place clean feeding equipment and hand held can opener (and anything else that will touch the formula) in a large pot. Cover with water and let it boil hard and bubble for 2 minutes. Remove from pot with sterile tongs and let air dry on a clean towel. Continue to sterilize feeding equipment for the duration you are formula feeding. Electric kettles and dishwashers do not sterilize equipment.

For All Formula types: Check the manufacturer's instructions for how long prepared formula can be kept in the fridge and how long you can safely use opened cans of prepared/unprepared formula. Always check and use formula before the expiry date. To find out about infant formula recalls, go to: www.healthycanadians.gc.ca

READY-TO-FEED FORMULA

Ready-to-feed formula does not require the addition of water and can be poured into a sterilized container* to feed.

LIQUID CONCENTRATE FORMULA

When using a liquid concentrated formula, you must always add water before feeding to your baby. Use room temperature sterilized water (as directed above) to add to the concentrate and follow the preparation directions on the label.

POWDERED FORMULA

Powdered formula is not sterile. Harmful bacteria called *E. Sakazakii* can be found in powdered formula and can cause illness. This is rare and is less of a risk for babies that are healthy and born full term. Avoid using powdered formula for babies who are premature, have a low birth weight or a weakened immune system if possible.

Preparing powdered formula for term infants

Boil water for 2 minutes and then let it cool to body temperature or room temperature.. Pour the required amount of water into a sterilized container* and, right before feeding, add the powder according to package directions. Feed immediately.

Preparing powdered formula for premature infants

Boil water for 2 minutes and then let cool for approximately, but no longer than 30 minutes so the temperature does not go below 70 degrees F. Pour the required amount of hot water into sterilized containers* and add the powder according to the package directions. Cool the containers of formula* to between room and body temperature by quickly placing the container* of prepared formula under cold running water or into a container of cold or ice water. You can store prepared powdered formula in the fridge for up to 24 hours.

In some cases, powdered infant formula cannot be prepared with boiled water cooled to 70°C because of potentially heat-sensitive ingredients, such as human milk fortifiers or formulas for special medical purposes. This will be under the advice of your health care provider and can be prepared the same way as powdered formula for a term infant.

Formula at room temperature

Formula should not be left at room temperature for longer than 2 hours. Once you begin feeding your baby, use the formula within 2 hours. All leftovers should be thrown out. Bacteria can grow in the used formula container that can make your baby sick.

Warming Prepared Formula

The safest way to warm formula is to place the container in a dish of hot water. Be sure that no formula leaks from the container and that no hot water leaks into the formula. Never microwave plastic or glass containers, bags or nipples because the plastic could melt and leak into the formula or result in burns due to unevenly heated formula. Before feeding test the formula on the back of your hand. It should feel warm, not hot.

See *Formula Feeding Guidelines for the Newborn* for suggested feeding amounts and infant stomach size.

*This handout refers to feeding containers. The method of feeding should be determined by parents and based on an informed decision. Talk to your health care provider about your options.

References: Health Canada (www.hc-sc.gc.ca), Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (www.breastfeedingcanada.ca)
Government of Canada (www.healthycanadians.gc.ca)

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