

# Bottle feeding your baby

*Congratulations on the birth of your baby!*

How to feed your baby is one of the choices you need to make as a parent / caregiver. As with every choice, we want you to feel fully informed and supported.

Breast / chest milk is healthiest for you and your baby. We want to support you to give as much of your own milk as you can or choose.

It is rare to be unable to produce enough milk, but sometimes extra support is needed until your milk supply is established. Giving other milk without expressing will reduce your own milk supply.

You do not need to decide how you will feed your baby long term. It may help to focus just on the next feed, or take things one day at a time.

**This booklet does not cover all possible situations or replace personalised support and advice. Some advice may change as your baby gets older. Please ask staff if you have questions or need help at any time.**



Some families may stop breast / chest feeding if they run into challenges and do not know what to do.

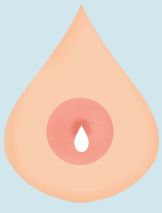
*Did you know....*

It is possible to re-start breast / chest feeding even after stopping. If you are giving bottles because of worries about breast / chest feeding or your milk supply, please reach out for extra support. We are here to help.



# Types of milk

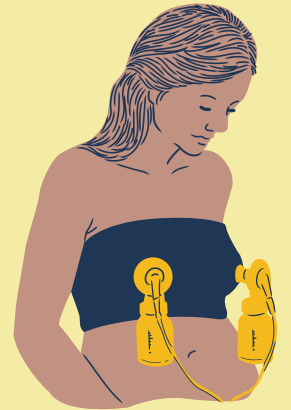
## Did you know....



The living parts of breast / chest milk which give the health benefits to your baby cannot be made in formula milk. The more of your own milk you provide for your baby, the more protection from illness for you both.

After breast / chest feeding, the birth parent's expressed milk is the next healthiest choice.

If you are experiencing feeding challenges in the first 28 days, the hospital's Specialist Infant Feeding Team offer free breast / chest pump loans. These are short-term loans to help you establish your own milk supply. Speak to your midwife or health visitor for more information.



The information advertised by formula companies is not always accurate.

You can get accurate and up-to-date information about types / brands of milk and safe bottle feeding on the **First Steps Nutrition Trust** website



[First Steps Nutrition Trust](#)

## If you are using formula...

1

A **first infant formula** should always be used. It does not matter which brand you use as they are all very similar by law. It is safe to change brands at any time.

Your baby should stay on **first milk for the first year**. Hungrier baby, follow-on, or comfort milks are never needed. At one year of age your baby can move on from formula milk to pasteurised whole cow's milk.



Formula milk contains added Vitamin D. Any babies drinking less than 500mL a day also need a Vitamin D supplement.

# Cleaning and sterilising your equipment

It is important to properly clean and sterilise feeding equipment. This helps stop your baby getting tummy upsets or infections.

Clean the bottle and teat in hot, soapy water using a clean bottle brush. After cleaning, rinse in cold running water then sterilise.



If you have a dishwasher, it can be used to clean your equipment but you will still need to sterilise it. Dishwashers do not get hot enough to sterilise.

## Sterilising

After cleaning, your equipment needs to be sterilised using either...

- cold-water sterilising solution
- steam
- boiling

If you are using a cold-water solution or steam steriliser, follow the manufacturer's instructions. If you are sterilising with steam or boiling, be careful to avoid scalds or burns.

For more detailed information, see the Guide to Bottle Feeding on the ULTH postnatal leaflets webpage.



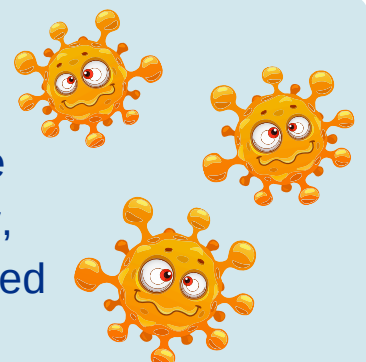
*Remember to wash your hands and clean your work surface!*



[ULTH Postnatal Leaflets](#)



It is best to remove equipment from the steriliser just before they are used. If you are not using the bottles straight away, connect the teat and put on the lid. This protects the sterilised bottle and teat from germs or viruses.



# Bottle feeding your baby

Babies do not feed on a schedule. Feed your baby whenever they show signs of hunger. They may not always want to finish the full amount of milk they have been offered - this is okay. This is called responsive feeding and helps your baby to regulate their own appetite.



It is important not to overfeed your baby. This can make your baby more likely to have a sore tummy or spit up milk. Overfeeding increases your baby's risk of obesity in later life.

The following tips let your baby control the pace of the feed and help to prevent over-eating.

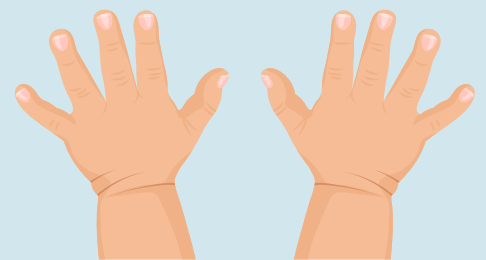
## *Let your baby control the pace of the feed*

It may sound like a good thing for your baby to finish their bottle quickly, but it is healthier for babies to take some pauses and breaks as they drink.

- ★ Hold your baby close to you in a semi-upright position
- ★ Hold the bottle level with the floor
- ★ This position stops the milk from flowing too fast. Baby is in control of the pace of the feed because they only get milk when they suck
- ★ When baby is in control of the pace of the feed, it is a calmer and nicer experience for them
- ★ Watch your baby for signs they need a pause or short break.

Signs include;

- stopping sucking
- turning their head or pushing the bottle away
- milk spilling out of the corners of their mouth
- spreading or splaying their fingers or toes



To check if your baby wants more milk, brush the teat against their nose or mouth. Do not force the teat into their mouth or make them finish the feed as this can be distressing for your baby.

# Bottle feeding and your baby's development

Feeding is an important time for your baby. Babies feel more safe if most feeds are given by parents or main caregivers. This also helps you to bond with each other. Because of this, we recommend that only one or two special people give baby bottle feeds, especially in the early weeks.

*Did you know....*

Every time you comfort and respond to your baby, a hormone is released which helps their brain development!



## Making feeds a special time



Simple things can make feeds an extra special time for you and your baby. During feeds try...

- making eye contact with your baby
- talking or singing to them
- skin to skin cuddles
- pacing the feed to your baby's cues



### Top Tip

Try and swap which side you hold your baby for bottle feeds. This helps to protect their natural head shape.



### Keeping feeds safe



Your baby needs to be held safely and supervised throughout every feed. Never use anything to prop a bottle in your baby's mouth. Never leave your baby alone when feeding. Your baby may choke on or breathe in the milk. This can be life-threatening.

*Did you know....*

Your own milk contains healthy bacteria which are very important for your baby. Formula milk does not contain these, but lots of skin to skin cuddles can help expose your baby to these important friendly bacteria.



# Making up a powdered formula feed

## *Did you know....*

Powdered infant formula may occasionally contain harmful bacteria. Although these bacteria are rare, they can make your baby very sick and can be life threatening.


Babies' immune systems are immature so it is important to make up formula feeds correctly to kill any bad bacteria which may be in the milk powder.

## *Step by step guide*

- Make up feeds **one at a time** when needed
- Fill the kettle with at least **1 litre of fresh tap water** from the cold tap and boil it.
- **Once the water is boiled, the feed must be made up within 30 minutes.** This is to make sure the water is still above 70 degrees Celsius. Water colder than 70 degrees Celsius is not hot enough to kill any bacteria.
- Pour the boiled **water into the bottle first**, check the manufacturer's instructions for the amount of water.
- Loosely fill the scoop with formula powder and level with the flat edge of a clean, dry knife. Follow the manufacturer's instructions - always put in the **recommended number of scoops.**
- Replace the teat and lid. Be careful not to touch the parts which will come into contact with baby's mouth
- **Shake** the bottle until all of the powder is dissolved
- **The milk needs to be cooled** so it is not too hot for your baby. You can cool the formula by holding the bottom half of the bottle under cold running water.
- **Test the temperature** before feeding your baby, drip a little milk onto your inner wrist - it should feel warm or cool, but **not hot.**




# Additional safety information

When baby is finished, throw away any leftover milk 




Fill the kettle with **fresh** tap water each time - water which has been boiled before contains different amounts of minerals

Bottled or artificially softened water is not recommended for making up formula feeds - they may contain too much sodium or sulphate 



If you are using cold water sterilising solution, always shake off any excess solution. You can also rinse with cooled boiled water from the kettle. Un-boiled tap water is not sterile so do not rinse under the tap!

Feeding equipment can become damaged over time. Using damaged equipment can be dangerous for your baby. Check for signs of wear each time you clean, sterilise, or use your equipment 



Always use the scoop provided with the pack of formula you are using and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Using a different scoop, or a different number of scoops than advised, can be dangerous for your baby

## Feed Preparation Machines

These machines are not recommended. They may not make up feeds safely for your baby.

The safest way to make up powdered formula feeds is to use water freshly boiled in a kettle.

## Top Tip

A flask can be used to keep hot water ready for formula feeds. Pre-heat a flask for 1 minute with boiling water. Empty this then re-fill again with more boiling water. This water will stay hot enough to make up a feed within the next 3 hours.



Please speak to your midwife, GP, or health visitor if you have any questions about feeding your baby.



With special thanks to the mothers and families who donated their pictures and supported co-production. References: Some images and content from 'Off to the best start' (2015) leaflet by DOH and content from 'Building a Happy Baby' (2016) leaflet by Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative.

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