

Feeding Time is Bonding Time!

Tips for Successful Bottle-Feeding

Bonding with your baby in the first few months of life is so important. Your decision on how to feed your baby is a very personal one. No matter how you choose to feed your baby, holding him while feeding will enhance your bonding experience. If you have decided to bottle feed your baby or not to breast-feed exclusively, there is important information that you should be aware of regarding health and safety. The more you can do to keep your baby healthy and happy, the less stressful the first few months of life with baby will be.

Safety first!

Washing your hands is the first step in avoiding food-borne illnesses and keeping baby safe. Before handling formula or breast milk, wash your hands and forearms for at least 20 seconds under warm, running water, rubbing hands together and paying special attention to fingernails.

Wash baby bottles and nipples well using a clean bottle brush with dishwashing liquid and hot water or wash them in a dishwasher. It's not necessary to sterilize these unless your pediatrician recommends it for your baby.

Choosing a Formula *Other than breast milk, an iron-fortified formula is the only food your baby should need during the first four to six months of life.* Three types of infant formula are available, and they are all equally nutritious:

- **Ready-to-feed:** Most expensive, no preparation time required.
- **Concentrated liquid:** Mid-priced, some preparation required.
- **Powdered:** Least expensive, most preparation time required, and good for travel. Powdered formula can be pre-measured and put in bottles, then water added when your baby is hungry.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends that only commercially available infant formulas be used. Recipes for making infant formulas at home are not regulated and may result in serious nutritional deficiencies. For more information on infant formula, visit www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety.

Preparation and Storage No matter which type of formula you choose, always use it before the "Use by" date. Be sure to follow the directions on the formula label exactly.

The FDA recommends that water used in the preparation of infant formula be boiled for one minute. Boiling reduces the risk of bacteria, viruses or parasites that could make baby sick. Check with your pediatrician to determine if he or she feels this is necessary in your situation.

Do not prepare more formula than you will need. Prepare several small bottles rather than one or two large bottles. Store all bottles of formula and breast milk in the refrigerator at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or colder until they are needed. Bottles of formula can be stored in the refrigerator for up to two days. Bottles of breast milk should be refrigerated and used within 24 hours or frozen for up to 3 months at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Open cans of liquid formula should be kept in the refrigerator, covered, and used within 48 hours.

When traveling with baby, carry formula or breast milk in an insulated cooler with ice or frozen gel packs to keep it safe until needed. This includes trips to your child care provider. Label bottles with your baby's name and the date the formula or breast milk was prepared for your child care provider. Be sure not to let dirty diapers come in contact with bottles or food in diaper bags.

Warming Bottles You don't have to warm infant formula. If



you want to warm a bottle, hold it under hot running tap water or set the bottle in a container of hot, but not boiling, water. *Never* heat formula or breast milk on the stove or in a microwave oven. Heating in a microwave can result in hot spots in the liquid which can burn your baby's mouth and throat. Then, check the temperature on your skin before offering it to your baby. It should be only lukewarm.

Feeding Your Baby It's important to hold your baby close to you in your arms while feeding, alternating arms to stimulate your baby's eye development. Even though you might have a million things to do, avoid the temptation to prop a bottle. By holding your baby during feeding, you will decrease the likelihood of ear infections, baby bottle tooth decay, and choking on the formula. Hold your baby's head a little higher than the rest of his body while feeding him. This will keep the formula from backing up or pooling in his inner ear, which could cause an ear infection.

When you begin feeding, touch the nipple next to the baby's mouth. The baby will turn and grasp the nipple. Hold the bottle so that it sticks straight out. Be sure there is formula in the nipple. Air bubbles should appear in the formula as your baby drinks. If the bubbles stop, check for a clogged nipple.

Babies generally need to be fed every 2 to 3 hours in the first few months of life. Feed until your baby gives you signs she is full, such as sealing her lips, spitting out the nipple, and turning her head. Most feedings take 20 minutes or less. Your baby may not finish all of the formula in the bottle at every feeding. Do not try to force your baby to finish the entire bottle. Your baby will let you know when she is finished eating. Also, do not save any formula left in the bottle after a feeding. It should be thrown away.

Spitting up small amounts of formula several times a day is normal, especially in the first seven months of life. If baby spits up often, tips given by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Digestive Health and Nutrition Foundation might be helpful. These include decreasing the size of each feeding (making up for it by feeding more often), burping baby several times during the feeding (not just after feeding), avoiding tight diapers and waistbands, and keeping baby upright for at least 30 minutes after feeding.

To keep baby safe, remember these steps:

Clean – Wash your hands and your baby's hands before handling bottles and food. Keep kitchens and utensils clean.

Separate – Keep raw meats and their juices away from baby's bottles, foods, toys and pacifiers. Also, keep dirty diapers out of diaper bags that contain baby's food.

Chill – Keep bottles of formula and breast milk cold until needed.

Discard – Once the bottle has been in baby's mouth, any formula or breast milk left in the bottle after feeding should be discarded. Also, discard formula or breast milk if it has been at room temperature for more than one hour.

Disclaimer: *This information is not intended to substitute or replace the professional medical advice you receive from your child's physician. The content provided is for informational purposes only, and was not designed to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease. Please consult your child's physician with any questions or concerns you may have regarding a medical condition.*



Talk to Your Health Care Provider Warning signs that your baby might have a more serious health problem than simply spitting up include poor growth, lack of interest in feeding, excessive irritability, respiratory problems, forceful vomiting, and spitting up large amounts of formula. Contact your doctor if you have any concerns about your baby's health. If you think your baby is having a reaction to the formula, talk to your doctor. There are many types of iron-fortified formula to choose from.

The Food and Drug Administration is in charge of enforcing standards regarding infant formula. To report adverse effects or illnesses you believe may be related to the use of an infant formula, contact FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088 or www.fda.gov/medwatch/report/consumer/consumer.htm.

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For more information, contact your FACS Cooperative Extension Agent at 1-800-ASK-UGA1 (275-8421) or visit: www.gafamilies.org for other nutrition and food safety tips for keeping you and baby healthy.

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