

Infant formula



A guide to safe preparation
and feeding of infant formula



Government
of South Australia

SA Health

A guide to safe preparation and feeding of infant formula

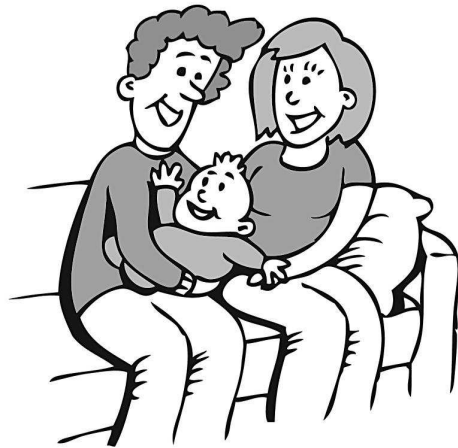
This is a booklet for families who have already decided to bottle feed their baby. In this booklet, you will find information on how to feed your baby with infant formula.

If you have decided to breastfeed, or don't know whether to keep breastfeeding, please see your midwife, lactation consultant, child and family health nurse, or doctor for help or information.

If you are worried about your baby's feeding or growth, please speak to your child and family health nurse or doctor.

You can find more good advice about feeding babies and children on the Child and Youth Health website at www.cyh.com, or call the Parent Helpline on 1300 364 100 (local call cost from anywhere in South Australia).

*In this booklet, we use 'he' and 'she' in turn.
Please change to suit your baby's sex.*



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All about infant formula

When do I need to use infant formula?

If your baby is not drinking breastmilk, the only other safe choice is infant formula as the main drink for the first 12 months of life. There are many reasons why a baby may be given formula, but it is important to know that your baby will still grow and develop well. You can still have lots of cuddles and bonding time with your baby while you are bottle feeding.

What is infant formula?

Most infant formulas are made from cow's milk, but the amount and type of protein, fat, and sometimes carbohydrates have been changed. Some extra minerals (such as iron) and vitamins have also been added. These changes make the formula a good balance of nutrition for babies who are not breastfeeding. Breastmilk has other ingredients which lower the chance of your baby getting sick, but these are not in formula.

Which formula is best for my baby?

Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, you don't need to use a certain brand of formula. The formula your baby was on in hospital does not mean it is the 'best' one to use. Hospitals can't stock all the different types of formula, and often just keep a few brands. So you might want to decide which one to use based on cost and what brand you can easily buy.

All infant formulas you can buy in Australia are safe to use for babies, for the age group written on the can. There are not a lot of differences between brands. The companies have to follow Australian standards to make the formula. Formulas are all made up to give about the same amount of energy (calories or kilojoules), protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals as each other.



The ones used from birth are called 'starter', 'newborn' or 'step 1' formulas. These can be used from birth until 12 months of age. They give your baby everything she needs in a formula.

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What if I don't think the formula I am using suits my baby?

Formulas made from cow's milk are all very similar, so babies usually don't do better having one brand rather than another. If you want to change brands, remember to check how many scoops of powder and how much water to use and use only the scoop that came with that can. Some babies might be a bit unsettled for a few days if their formula is changed, and his poos might look or smell a bit different.

Changing the type of formula because of a small rash, or because your baby seems unsettled usually does not help. Speak to your doctor about these problems instead of trying different formulas.

What do the words on the can of formula mean?

Some formulas now add extra ingredients to try and make them more like breastmilk. Others are made for babies with special medical needs. But for most babies, regular formulas are just as good, and you do not need to use special ones.

Listed below are some of the common names you might see on some cans of formula, and what they mean. Most of the 'extra' ingredients in the list haven't been around long enough to know if your baby will have better health in the long term from using them. Many of these formulas cost more than regular ones. So it is up to you whether you would like to use them.

AR / Thickened

'AR' means 'anti-regurgitation'. These formulas may be used for babies with reflux. They have a thickener added to them. AR formulas do not always help with reflux, so ask your doctor's advice first before changing the formula. There may be other ways to manage reflux.

HA

“HA” means ‘Hypo-allergenic’. These formulas contain protein that has been broken down into smaller parts or ‘partially hydrolysed’. They are marketed at babies who are at high risk of developing allergies (e.g. where immediate family members have asthma, eczema, hay fever or food allergies). However, currently there is no consistent convincing evidence to support that these formulas protect against the development of allergies. If you think your baby might have an allergy to formula, or is at risk of allergies, speak to your doctor.

Bifidus / Probiotics / Prebiotics

Bifidus and probiotics are bacteria that are added to the formula. They may help to balance the bacteria in your baby’s digestive system. Prebiotics are ingredients that can promote the growth of good bacteria. The good bacteria may be good for your baby’s tummy, but babies can also be healthy without them in their formula.

Lactose-free

Lactose is the natural sugar in breastmilk, cow’s milk and formula. Sometimes a baby may not be able to break down or digest the lactose. These types of formulas are only needed for babies who have a problem with lactose (lactose intolerance). Be sure to discuss this with your doctor first.

Can I use soy or goat’s milk infant formulas?

Soy and goat **infant formulas** have no cow’s milk in them. They have all the vitamins, minerals and nutrition your baby needs. But most babies do not need to have these types of formulas. Soy and goat’s milk formulas may also cost more than cow’s milk formulas.

If you would like to give your baby soy or goat’s milk formula, you can use them from birth until 12 months of age. Speak to your doctor about when to change on to regular soy or goat’s milk after 12 months of age.

If you think your baby might have an allergy to a cow’s milk formula, speak to your doctor. Soy or goat’s milk formulas are usually not the best ones to use for babies with a cow’s milk allergy. This is because some babies will react to soy or goat’s milk as well. Signs your baby might have an allergy include vomiting, diarrhoea, a rash, or difficulty breathing.

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Soy infant formulas:

- > Are made from soybeans and do not contain any animal products.
- > Don't have lactose in them (a natural sugar in cow's milk and breastmilk).

The reasons soy infant formulas may be used include:

- > If you want your baby to be a vegan (so don't want him to have a cow's milk formula).
- > If your baby has a problem with lactose (lactose intolerance). BUT there are other formulas you can use for this problem, and soy formula may not be the first choice. So it's best to speak to your doctor before changing formula.

Goat's milk infant formulas:

- > Are made from goat's milk. But goat's milk is not very different to cow's milk.
- > Have lactose in them (so are not better for babies who have a problem with lactose).
- > If you do want your baby to have goat's milk, it is very important you use goat's milk formula, not regular goat's milk.

Rice milk infant formula:

- > Is made from hydrolysed (broken down) rice protein.
- > Is suitable for babies who are unable to tolerate cow's milk formula or who have confirmed cow's milk allergy.
- > Is lactose free therefore is suitable for babies with lactose intolerance.
- > Talk to your Doctor before changing to rice formula.

Should I use 'Follow-On' formula for my baby?

These formulas may be called 'follow-on', 'progress' or 'step 2'. They are different to starter or step 1 formulas. They may have more iron and protein in them. The mix of vitamins and minerals is also different to starter or step 1 formulas.

These formulas are made for babies **over six months old**. You should not give them to babies younger than this, as the different mix of nutrients is not right for babies under 6 months.

Babies over 6 months of age do have different nutritional needs to younger babies. But these needs can be met with starter or step 1 formula and solid foods. So your baby does not have to have a follow-on formula after 6 months of age. If you wish to use one, you can give it to your baby aged 6 to 12 months.

Can I give my baby cow's milk instead of formula?

No. Cow's milk is not the right main milk drink to give to babies. It has too much protein, salt and minerals, and not enough vitamins or iron. Cow's milk can be hard for your baby to digest and can cause some health problems (such as low blood levels of iron) if it is your baby's main food. This includes full cream, reduced fat, low fat, skimmer or skim milk, evaporated or powdered milk, sweetened condensed milk, pasteurised milk and UHT (long-life) milk.



Continue to use formula as the main drink until your baby is 12 months old.

After your baby is 6 months old, you may begin to use full cream cow's milk in small amounts. Once you have started giving solid foods to your baby (by around 6 months of age), you can use small amounts of full cream cow's milk in foods such as custard, yoghurt, milk desserts, on cereal or a small amount from a cup.

When your baby is over 12 months old, you may stop using formula and change to full cream cow's milk as the main drink. This is a good time to stop using the bottle, so try to give cow's milk from a cup. Limit to 500ml of milk a day, as your baby will be eating a good range of foods by now to get all the nutrients she needs.

What about toddler milks?

Toddler milks should not be used for babies under 12 months of age. Toddler milks do not have the right balance of nutrition for babies, and can be hard to digest. They are made for children aged 1 to 3 years. But a toddler who is eating a balanced diet does not need to drink toddler milk. Full cream cow's milk is suitable until at least 2 years of age (when a reduced fat milk should then be used, see page 24).

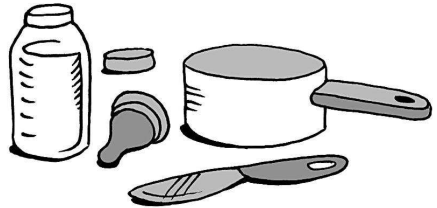
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Making up formula

What do I need to make up formula?

You will need:

- > Bottles, with caps and discs.
- > Teats.
- > Knife (not a sharp one) Used to level off the formula powder. Plastic or metal.
- > A bottle brush and equipment for sterilising (see page 20 on cleaning and sterilising).



Is there a special bottle or teat I should use?

Most babies don't need any special bottle or teat to feed. Plain shaped bottles are easier to clean.

Some babies may prefer a certain type of teat, but no teat is better than the other. Some teats have bigger or smaller holes, and the formula will come out faster or slower. If it's too slow, your baby may get tired from sucking and not drink enough. If it's too fast, your baby might splutter or choke on the milk.

See which teat your baby likes. This may change as your baby gets older.

What kind of water do I use to make up formula?

It is best to use tap water to make up your baby's formula. Most tap water has fluoride in it, which is important for your baby's teeth. Remember to:

- > Boil the water until your baby is at least 6 months old.
 - When an electric kettle automatically switches off is fine.
 - Kettles with no automatic switch-off should be turned off within 30 seconds of boiling.
- > Water that comes from a tap with a filter also needs to be boiled (until at least 6 months of age).
- > Add fresh water to the kettle each time you make up formula.
- > Let the water cool before you use it so it is lukewarm, or about room temperature.



Keep warm water away from babies and young children. Don't walk around carrying warm water.

If you would like to keep boiling tap water for your baby until 12 months of age (when you will change from formula to cow's milk), this is fine.

Spring or rain water does not have fluoride in it. Some bottled water now has fluoride added. Tap water in some country areas may or may not have fluoride. If you can't use water with fluoride for your baby's formula, speak to your dentist about your baby's teeth.

Spring or bottled water should only be used if you can't use tap water. It needs to be boiled for babies until they are at least 6 months old.

If you have a rain water tank and can't use tap water, the rain water needs to be boiled for all babies and children until they are at least 12 months old.

Ensure your rainwater tank is properly maintained to prevent contamination of the water. For information on how to ensure your water is safe, visit the SA Health website at

[http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/protecting+public+health/water+quality/rainwater#Is rainwater safe to drink?](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/protecting+public+health/water+quality/rainwater#Is%20rainwater%20safe%20to%20drink?)

Never use mineral water for making up formula. It has high levels of salts and minerals. This is not good for your baby's kidneys.

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How do I make up the formula?

Check the instructions on the can. Use the scoop that came in the can. Clean and sterilise the bottle, teat and other feeding equipment before you start (see page 20 on cleaning and sterilising).



1. Wash your hands with soap and water first and dry them well.



2. Fill the kettle with fresh tap water. Let it boil and cool down until it is lukewarm, or around room temperature.



3. Wipe down the area where you are going to make the formula with a clean cloth.

4. Pour the right amount of cooled, boiled water into the bottle.

5. Add the right number of scoops to the water. Use a clean knife to level off the powder on each scoop (turn the knife upside down and use the flat edge).



6. Put the cap and disc on the top of the bottle.



7. Put the cap and disc on the top of the bottle.



8. Always check the temperature of the formula before you feed it to your baby.

Make sure you can read the markings on the side of the bottle when pouring out the water. If the markings are rubbing away or you can't read them clearly, too much or too little water may be added. This means the strength of the formula will not be right for your baby. Use a new bottle, or use a clearly-marked measuring jug instead (you will need to clean and sterilise it).

How much formula should I make up?

The safest way is to make up one bottle at a time. The table on the can of formula gives you a guide for your baby's age and how much he might drink. Do not worry if your baby takes a little more or less than this, as each baby is different. Your baby might even take different amounts of formula at each feed. Your child and family health nurse, doctor, or the Parent Helpline can assist you if you are concerned about the amount of formula your baby is drinking.

If you can't boil the water fresh for each feed, boil the water you are going to use. Then pour out the cooled, boiled water into separate clean and sterilised bottles. Put them in the fridge, and take them out one at a time. When you need them, warm the water first (see page 16), then add the powder. Shake the bottle well.

If you have to make up extra bottles of formula in advance, put them in the back of the fridge (where it is the coldest), not the door. Throw out any unused water or made up formula after 24 hours.

Can I save leftover formula?

Germs can start to grow in the milk after about an hour. Once a bottle has been warmed and your baby has been drinking from it, **do not** keep it for later. Throw out any leftover milk once your baby has finished feeding, or no more than 1 hour after a feed has started.

Even if you haven't warmed the formula, or your baby hasn't been drinking from the bottle, germs will still grow if the formula is not in the fridge. Throw out any made up formula that has been out of the fridge after 2 hours from when it was made.

How can I make up formula when I'm not at home?

The best thing to do is to take the (boiled) water in a sterilised bottle and the powder in a separate sterilised container. Mix it just before you need it.

If this is not possible, make up the formula at home and put it in the fridge until you are going out. Then put the bottle in a cooler (insulated) bag with some freezer packs to keep it cold. Use the formula within 2 hours.

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Feeding your baby with formula

How do I warm a bottle of formula for my baby?

If you are making up formula fresh for each feed, the water will be slightly warm and so usually will not need extra heating.

If you have made up extra bottles of water or formula in advance and get them out of the fridge, some babies will drink cold formula, but most like it warm. The best way to warm the formula or water is to put the bottle in a container of warm water (not boiling). Or place the bottle in a sink of warm water. If you have warmed up water in a bottle, then add the right number of scoops of formula. Shake it well.

Don't warm the water or formula for more than 10–15 minutes. This is because germs might grow in the formula, or it may be too hot for your baby. Bottle warmers can also be used. Follow the product instructions carefully.

Once you think the formula is nearly warm, check the temperature. Shake the bottle gently, then test a few drops of milk on your wrist first. It should feel just a little warm or even cool, not too warm or hot.

It is not recommended to use a microwave to heat your baby's bottle. Most microwaves heat things unevenly, so the milk might have 'hot spots' that could burn your baby's mouth.



If you HAVE to use a microwave to heat your baby's formula, you need to take particular care:

1. Heat the formula for short amounts of time (perhaps 20–30 seconds).
2. Turn the bottle upside down 8–10 times after heating (this helps to avoid 'hot spots').
3. Let it sit for 1–2 minutes before testing the temperature to allow the temperature of the formula to even out.
4. Shake gently, then test the temperature on your wrist before feeding your baby. If it is too hot, do not feed it to your baby. Cool it down in the fridge or under cold water, and check the temperature again.

How do I hold my baby when I give the bottle feeds?

Babies enjoy being held, cuddled and talked to during bottle feeds. This is important for her development, health and safety (see page 19).

1. Before you start:

- > Check the temperature of the milk on your wrist.
- > Check how quickly the formula comes out:
 - If you loosen the cap, the milk will come out faster.
 - If you tighten the cap, the milk will come out more slowly.
- > Hold the bottle at an angle so there is milk in the teat, not air.



2. When you are feeding:

- > Hold your baby while feeding.
 - Your baby should be able to look at you during feeds. It's a good idea to swap the sides you feed your baby from at each feed.
 - Babies who are not held while feeding also have a higher chance of choking, getting tooth decay or ear infections.

**Always hold the bottle yourself.
Don't prop the bottle, as your
baby might choke.**

- > Touch the teat gently on your baby's lips, this will usually start her sucking.
- > If you need to, burp your baby about halfway through. Don't keep trying if your baby is upset, as some babies like to drink the whole bottle at once.
- > Some babies aren't able to finish their whole feed at once. You might like to give your baby a break and try again after 10 minutes or so.
- > Some babies bring up a little milk during or after a feed, this is normal.
- > Remember to throw out any leftover milk:
 - 1 hour after the start of a feed if it has been warmed or your baby has been drinking from the bottle.
 - 2 hours from when it was made if the bottle has been sitting out of the fridge.

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How much formula should I give my baby?

Most babies will let you know when they are hungry and need to be fed. This is called 'demand feeding'. Young babies may want to feed more often than older babies. Older babies will usually drink more formula at one time.

As a guide:

- > Use the table on the can for the age of your baby. But it is normal for some babies to drink more and some to drink less than this.
- > Offer a bottle at least every 3 to 4 hours for young babies, less often as he gets older.
 - A 1 month old baby may have around 8 feeds a day.
 - A 6 month old baby may take around 5 feeds a day.
- > Don't force your baby to finish a bottle. If your baby starts turning his head away, fussing, or getting unsettled, he might be full.
- > If your baby always finishes his bottle and you think he is still hungry, offer a little more formula (but don't make him finish it if he doesn't want it).
- > If your baby doesn't seem interested in taking a bottle, try again 30 minutes later.
- > If your baby has regular wet nappies (5 or more disposable nappies per day), his poos are not hard or dry, and he is growing well, he is likely to be getting enough formula. If you don't think your baby is getting enough formula, speak to your child and family health nurse or doctor.

Can I make the formula stronger or weaker than the instructions on the can?

No. The number of scoops and amount of water on the label of the can is just right for your baby.

Sometimes if your baby has a special medical reason, your doctor or dietitian might tell you to use a different number of scoops to water. Make up the formula exactly as they have told you. Keep seeing them while your baby is on a special formula recipe.

Unless you are advised by your doctor because of a medical reason, do not add anything else to the bottle (such as baby cereal, biscuits or other solid foods).

Your baby may become sick by changing the amount of powder or water you add, or by using the wrong scoop.

Is it OK to settle my baby to sleep alone with a bottle?

No. Putting your baby to sleep with a bottle can be a choking hazard. It can also cause tooth decay.

Leaving a baby alone to feed may cause her to choke. Don't leave your baby alone with a propped bottle. It is best to hold her and the bottle during feeding.

Formula, breastmilk and cow's milk all have a natural sugar in them called lactose. If your baby is sucking on a bottle of formula or milk a lot in between feeding times, this can cause tooth decay. Even if your baby doesn't have any teeth yet, don't let the bottle sit in her mouth. It can be bad for future teeth once they show. She can also get into the habit of needing to suck on the bottle to relax into sleep.

If you are having trouble settling your baby, or getting her to sleep, speak to your child and family health nurse or doctor about some things you can try.

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Cleaning and sterilising bottles and equipment

How do I clean and sterilise the bottles and equipment?

Always clean AND sterilise the bottles, teats, and all feeding equipment you have used, until your baby is at least 6 months old. This helps to stop your baby from getting sick from germs. If you choose to stop sterilising the equipment after your baby is 6 months old, always make sure the bottles, teats and equipment are cleaned well for any babies or toddlers.

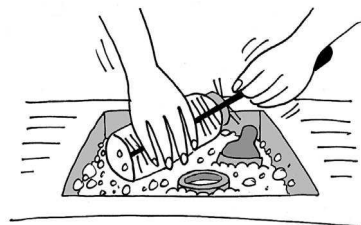
You will need:

- > A bottle brush (to clean the inside of the bottle well).
- > Items to sterilise the equipment:
 1. For boiling: a large saucepan OR
 2. For steaming: An electric or microwave steam sterilising unit OR
 3. For chemicals (e.g. Milton): a large plastic or glass container.

The first step is cleaning.

Step 1: Cleaning after a feed

- > Wash your hands with soap and water and dry them well.
- > Rinse the bottle and teat with cold water from the tap straight after feeding.
- > Then wash the bottle and teat well with hot water and detergent.
- > Use a bottle brush to clean all the bits of milk off the inside of the bottle.
- > Turn the teat inside out to clean off bits of milk, and squirt water through the holes.
- > Rinse the bottle and teat well in clean water (no detergent).



After cleaning, the next step is sterilising.

Step 2: Sterilising

- > All equipment used to make up your baby's feeds needs to be sterilised, including bottles, teats, caps, lids, discs, knives (to level off the powder), and any jugs or containers.
- > Clean the equipment first (see Step 1 above).
- > You can sterilise the equipment 3 different ways (see 'Different ways of sterilising' below).
- > After the equipment is sterilised, take it out with clean hands, put the lids back on the bottles, and store everything in a covered, clean place (e.g. a plastic container).
- > If you do not use the equipment within 24 hours, you will need to sterilise it again before you use it.

Different ways of sterilising

1. Boiling

- > Put bottles, teats and other equipment into a large saucepan.
- > Cover with cold tap water.
- > Make sure the equipment is completely covered with water and there are no air bubbles.
- > Put a lid on the pan, place it at the back of the stove, bring water to the boil, and boil for 5 minutes.
- > Let the water cool before taking the equipment out.
- > Shake off excess water, put the lids on the bottles, and store everything in a clean, dry place.



2. Steam Steriliser

- > You can buy electric steam sterilising kits or ones for the microwave.
- > Follow the product instructions carefully.
- > Glass bottles or metals (such as knives) must not be put in a microwave steriliser. Metal knives can be sterilised by boiling (see above).
- > Once you are finished, clean out the unit as per the instructions. Put the lids on the bottles, and store everything in a clean, dry place.



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3. Using chemicals (that are for sterilising baby feeding equipment e.g. Milton).

- > Always follow the instructions on the packet carefully.
- > Make up the solution in a large glass or plastic container or bowl.
- > Don't put metal (e.g. knives) into chemicals to sterilise. Metal knives can be sterilised by boiling (see page 21).
- > Fully cover everything with the solution (no air gaps).
- > Make up a fresh solution every 24 hours. Wash the bowl out with soapy water and rinse it before you put the new solution in there.
- > Be careful when handling the solution. Wash your hands afterwards.

How long do I have to keep sterilising the bottles and equipment?

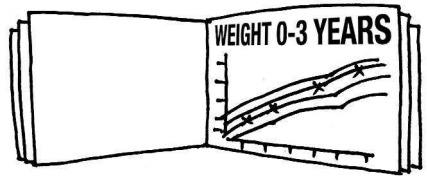
Always clean the bottles, teats and equipment well, for any babies or toddlers.

You need to sterilise the equipment after cleaning (using boiling, chemicals, or steam) until your baby is at least 6 months old. After this age, cleaning and washing them well should be enough. You may want to keep sterilising until your baby is 12 months old, when she stops drinking formula. This is ok too.

Growth and nappies

How do I know if my baby is growing properly?

Babies need a good amount of formula to grow well. You can check your baby's growth in the Personal Health Record (blue folder) you are given when your baby is born. When you visit your child and family health nurse or doctor, they can weigh and measure your baby. They can then write his measurements in the book, and check he is growing well on the weight and length charts. It is important you see your nurse or doctor regularly to check your baby's growth, especially if you are worried about your baby's feeding or growth.



Are my baby's nappies normal?

Young babies will have many wet nappies a day, less as they get older. It can be hard to tell if disposable nappies are wet, so check to see if they are heavier than a clean (dry) nappy. There should be at least 5 wet disposable nappies a day, or 6 to 8 wet cloth nappies.

Baby poos vary a lot in colour (from different browns to grey-blue, to greenish-yellow) and in how soft or firm they are (from quite liquid-like, to paste-like, to firm). If your baby is having trouble passing a poo and gets upset, and the poo is very firm and dry or like pebbles, your baby may be constipated. Check your baby is getting enough formula to drink, and you are making up the formula exactly as it says on the can. Your child and family health nurse or doctor can help more with this.

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Other drinks

When can I stop using formula and change to cow's milk as my baby's main milk drink?

Use formula as your baby's main drink until 12 months of age. After this age, you may offer full cream cow's milk from a cup. After your baby is 12 months old, it is best to stop using the bottle. Small amounts of cow's milk can be used in solid foods after 6 months of age (see page 11).



Children up to the age of 2 years need the energy and nutrition of full cream milk. After 2 years of age children can drink reduced fat milks with the rest of the family.

Are soy, rice, almond, oat, sheep's or goat's milk good for my baby?

Soy, rice, almond, oat, sheep's or goat's milk are not healthy to give to babies as their main milk drink under 12 months of age. They do not have enough of the right nutrients (vitamins, iron, etc.) or the right balance for babies. Your baby will not grow properly or get all she needs from these milks.

After 12 months of age soy milk can be used instead of cow's milk if preferred. Choose soy milk that has added calcium (at least 100mg per 100ml).

Rice milk, oat milk and almond milk are very low in protein and should not take the place of cow's milk or soy milk.

Do I need to give my baby water to drink?

Young babies usually do not need to be given water. But if the weather is hot, your baby may want to drink more than his usual amount of formula feeds. In hot weather you can give your baby extra formula, or you may give him some extra water. Remember to boil the water if your baby is under 6 months old. (For rain water, boil it until your child is at least 12 months old).



When you are starting solid foods (by around 6 months of age) you can offer your baby small drinks of water from a cup. It is important for your baby to learn the skills of drinking from a cup. Continue formula from a bottle until around 12 months.

Can I give fruit juice or other drinks to my baby?

Babies under 12 months should **not** be given fruit juice – it is very acidic and can cause tooth decay. Too much juice can cause diarrhoea (runny poos) and can reduce your baby's appetite. Breastmilk or formula and water are all your baby needs to drink for the first 12 months of life.



If you choose to give an older child juice, dilute 1 part juice to 3 parts water. Don't give your child more than 1 small glass (125ml) of diluted juice each day with a meal. If you are giving your child juice, offer it from a cup, **not** a bottle.

Tea (including herbal teas and iced teas), coffee (hot or iced), hot chocolate, flavoured milks, vitamin drinks, cordials, 'sugar-free' or 'diet' drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks, soft drinks (fizzy drinks) or alcohol are **not** suitable for babies. Many of these drinks are very sweet, some contain caffeine (e.g. tea, coffee, cola, chocolate drinks, energy drinks), and some can be unsafe for your baby's kidneys and health (e.g. sports drinks, energy drinks, alcohol).

Parents can set a good example by drinking water.



When should I start using a cup instead of a bottle?

Children who drink from a bottle for too long have a higher chance of tooth decay, ear infections, and it may reduce their appetite for foods. This can lead to poor nutrition (such as low iron). Drinking from a cup is also an important skill for your baby to learn.

Once you are starting to give your baby solid foods by around 6 months of age, you can give your baby some tap water to drink from a cup.



When you change your baby from formula on to regular cow's milk at 12 months of age, use a cup. The bottle is not needed any more.

Infant formula

A word on solid foods

How do I know when my baby is ready to start solid foods?

Most babies are ready to start taking some solid foods by around 6 months. Signs your baby is ready to move on to solid foods are:

- > She can sit up (with support) and hold her head up by herself.
- > She does not push things straight out of her mouth with her tongue.
- > She is interested in other people eating (or reaches for food), or tries to put things in her mouth.
- > She seems to want more food, even after a full formula feed.



By around 6 months, your baby needs to learn how to eat. Foods are also needed to give important nutrients (such as iron). So start solids by around 6 months of age, and not later than this, or your baby might not be getting everything she needs.

When your baby is ready to start eating solid foods, she will still drink a lot of formula. It will be her main drink and an important source of nutrients until she is 12 months of age.

You can get information on introducing solids from your child and family health nurse, the Child and Youth Health website (www.cyh.com) or the Parent Helpline (1300 364 100).

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If you require this information in an alternative language or format please contact SA Health on the details provided above and they will make every effort to assist you.

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