

How to prepare ready-to-feed infant formula

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Disinfect counter and wash hands with soap and water. Wash top of can with warm water.	Have sterilized items ready on a clean paper towel. (See Sterilizing equipment on back)	Infant formula comes in different packaging. Always read the label and instructions carefully.	Shake the formula and open it. Use a sterilized can opener, if needed.	Pour amount of infant formula for one feeding into each sterilized bottle. DO NOT ADD WATER.
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Pick up nipples, rims and caps with sterile tongs and put on bottles. Then tighten with your hands.	Use formula right away or store prepared bottles in refrigerator. Use within 24 hours.	Close or tightly cover open package of formula and put in the refrigerator. Use within 48 hours.	After feeding your baby, throw away what they don't drink within two hours.	

Tips for preparing and feeding infant formula

There are three types of formula – powder, liquid concentrate, and ready-to-feed. Instructions are different for each kind of formula. Be sure to follow the directions on the label carefully. For all types of formula, check the expiry date and ensure the formula package is not damaged.

Water

- Water used for infant formula should be boiled.
- In most cases, tap water is appropriate.
- Always use the cold water tap, not hot.
- Well water should be tested regularly for bacteria.
- To learn more about water testing:
www.hpph.ca/water.
- If you have lead pipes:
 - Run the water for at least 1 minute before using. This is important if water has been sitting in the pipes for a few hours (e.g., overnight or if you've been away).
 - Consider purchasing an approved end-of-tap filter to remove lead, or using bottled water.
 - Call your municipality for more information.

Sterilizing equipment

Equipment needed: large pot with lid, bottle brush, nipple brush, tongs, knife, fork, can opener, measuring cup, bottles, nipples, caps, rims.

1. Disinfect counter and wash hands with soap and water.
To disinfect: use a disinfectant wipe (follow the manufacturer's instructions) or a bleach solution. Mix 5mL (1 teaspoon) household bleach with 750mL (3 cups) of water. Put this in a spray bottle and label it. Spray your counter and wipe it with a clean cloth.
2. Wash all items in warm soapy water. Rinse well.
3. Make sure holes in nipples are not clogged.

4. Put clean items in a pot. Fill pot with water. Make sure items are covered with water. Boil for 2 minutes.
5. Remove items with tongs. Set on a clean paper towel to dry. If not using right away, store in a clean place.

Notes: Disposable bottle liners are sterile and should be thrown out after one use.

Nipples do break down over time. Throw out nipples when they become soft and sticky.

If using a baby bottle sterilizer, follow the manufacturer's instructions.

There is no research that says when it is safe to stop sterilizing equipment used for making infant formula.

Important notes

- If your baby is premature, immunocompromised, or low birth weight, use ready to feed or liquid concentrate infant formula because they are sterile. If using powdered formula, it is important to prepare it properly.
- Check expiry date on each can. Do not use after this date. Ensure the packages are clean and not damaged. Mark the date on the cans when you open them. Cover opened cans with plastic lid.
- Do not add water to ready-to-feed formula.
- Sterilize water: boil for a full 2 minutes. Do not use a kettle that turns off before 2 minutes.
- Do not freeze any kind of infant formula. Freezing makes it separate.
- If more than one bottle is prepared: quickly cool under cold running water and place in refrigerator. Use prepared bottles within 24 hours.
- If going away from home, take the prepared bottle out of the refrigerator and place in a cooler bag with ice packs.
- Once you start feeding baby, the bottle should be used within 2 hours. Throw away any unused formula, or formula that is not refrigerated within 2 hours.

Warming infant formula

- Put the bottle of infant formula in warm water for up to 15 minutes, or hold it under warm running tap water.
- Shake bottle to heat evenly.
- Check the temperature by putting a few drops on your wrist.
- Do not heat bottles in the microwave or on the stove.
- Ensure formula has cooled to room or body temperature before feeding to baby.

Feeding baby

Feeding is an important time to bond with your baby. Always hold your baby when you are feeding. Watch for early feeding cues.

1. Position them where they can make eye contact with you.
2. Wait for baby to open their mouth.
3. Tip bottle slightly so there is no air in the nipple.
4. Watch baby feed. Baby should be relaxed. Do not rush the feed.
5. Burp baby as needed.
6. Stop when baby shows signs of being full.

For more information about estimated formula amounts and feeding cues please refer to HPPH Feeding Infant Formula booklet.