



Decisions for feeding your baby

Before your baby is born, you will make a very important decision. You will decide whether to breast-feed or bottle-feed your baby. It's important to understand the facts about breast-feeding and bottle-feeding so you can make an informed decision.

Breast-feeding benefits for your baby:

Breast milk is the best food for your baby. Medical and nutrition experts recommend breast-feeding for at least one year. Breast milk:

- Meets all of your baby's nutritional needs for 6 months.
- Changes composition to meet your baby's changing needs.
- Is best for your baby's growth and brain development.
- Protects your baby from allergies and other common illnesses.
- Is easier to digest than cow's milk.
- Requires more sucking than bottle-feeding – this helps strengthen and develop baby's jaw.
- Helps develop a strong, nurturing relationship between you and your baby.

Breast-feeding benefits for the family:

- Saves money because you don't have to buy formula.
- Cuts health-care costs because your baby is healthier.
- Saves time because you don't have to prepare bottles.

Bottle-feeding benefits:

- If you decide breast-feeding is not for you, infant formula is a healthy alternative for your baby.
- Bottle-feeding also develops a strong, nurturing relationship between you and your baby

If you need help with breast-feeding:

Talk to your WIC nutritionist, a lactation consultant, La Leche League leader or a health-care provider with breast-feeding experience. Family members and friends who have experience breast-feeding can also help.

- Infant formula is nutritionally similar to breast milk, although it does not contain the factors that protect babies from allergies and other illnesses.
- Infant formula can give babies all the nutrients and calories they need until solid food is introduced.

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Keep breast milk safe for your baby

How do I store breast milk?

Wash your hands before pumping milk. Use special plastic storage bags that are made for storing breast milk. Allow room in the container for breast milk to expand in the freezer.

After pumping, seal the container and place it in ice water to cool quickly. Date the container and store it promptly in the refrigerator or freezer.

Breast milk that you will use in 1 to 2 days can be stored in the refrigerator. For longer storage, freeze breast milk.

How do I freeze breast milk?

Put breast milk in the back of your freezer, not in the door where temperatures are higher.

It is best to freeze small amounts of milk (2 to 4 ounces) to avoid waste and to cut down on thawing time.

Rotate your supply of breast milk in the freezer by using the oldest first. You can safely store breast milk up to three months in the freezer.

How do I thaw breast milk?

Thaw breast milk overnight in the refrigerator.

If you need to thaw breast milk quickly, put the container of breast milk in a cup under cold, running water.

Breast milk tends to separate when frozen, so you should gently shake the container to mix it before feeding.

Use thawed breast milk within 24 hours. Never refreeze it.

Do I need to heat breast milk before feeding my baby?

Breast milk can be fed to your baby cold, at room temperature or slightly warm.

If your baby prefers a warm bottle, hold the bottle under warm running water. Sprinkle a few drops on your wrist before feeding – it should feel slightly warm.

Never warm baby bottles in the microwave. Hot spots may form, which can burn your baby's mouth and throat.

Can I save leftover breast milk?

Throw away milk left in the bottle after feeding. Bacteria from your baby's mouth can contaminate milk left in the bottle and cause serious illness if reused.

Make time to play with your baby

Just like us, your baby needs time to move and be active each day. Daily physical activity will help your baby's muscles develop and will promote the development of motor skills like crawling and walking.

Younger babies

Find a safe place on the floor, on a carpet or a blanket, and give your baby the freedom to wave his or her arms and kick for long periods of time. To help develop visual skills, place your baby face-up and playfully move a toy or finger puppet where he or she can see it.

Older babies

Help your baby learn to crawl by placing a favorite toy in front of her or him, just out of reach. Encourage your baby to move toward the toy.

Toddlers

Give your toddler toys he or she can ride, push, pull, throw, catch and balance on.

Be sure to spend time each day in active play with your baby or toddler.

Prevent baby bottle tooth decay

Tooth decay happens when sweet liquids, like formula, breast milk, cow's milk, fruit juice or other sweet drinks, stay in your baby's mouth for a long time. Tooth decay can cause painful toothaches. Your baby's teeth may turn black and have to be pulled. If teeth are lost early, babies can have problems chewing or talking, and they can have damaged adult teeth.

Here's how to prevent baby bottle tooth decay:



- Wipe your baby's gums with a clean, wet washcloth or gauze pad after every feeding.
- When baby's first tooth appears, begin brushing with a soft toothbrush – no toothpaste is needed. Clean and massage gums in areas that remain toothless.
- Don't put your baby to bed with a bottle. If your baby falls asleep during feeding, move her or him around a bit to stimulate swallowing before putting to bed.
- Always hold your baby when he or she is drinking from a bottle. Don't prop bottles because babies can choke when they are lying down. Swallowing while lying down can also cause ear infections.
- If your baby needs comfort between regular feedings, at night or during naps, give her or him a clean pacifier. Never dip a pacifier in sweet liquid.



- When your baby is old enough for juice – usually after 6 months – serve it in a small plastic cup, not a bottle.
- Don't let your baby carry around and drink continuously from a cup or bottle.
- Don't feed your baby sweet foods like candy, cookies, cakes, sweetened cereals or raisins.

- Use a clean teething ring or rattle to soothe a teething baby's gums instead of cold juice.
- Start visits to the dentist by your baby's first birthday. Ask your dentist if your local water contains fluoride. If not, ask how your baby should get fluoride.



Water intoxication: Too much water can harm your baby

Feeding your baby too much water causes *water intoxication*.

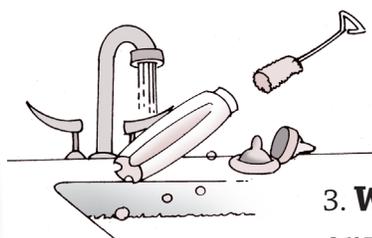
- Water intoxication can make your baby sleep more than usual and make your baby difficult to wake up. It may cause seizures, brain damage or death.
- Until seven months of age, breast milk or formula contain all the water your baby needs.
- After seven months, you can offer your baby 4 to 8 ounces of water a day. Don't add sugar, honey, corn syrup, soda or tea to the water to encourage your baby to drink.
- Adding too much water to infant formula can also cause water intoxication. Carefully follow the instructions on your formula container.
- Sick babies may need extra water. Continue breast milk or infant formula and contact your health-care provider.
- If you are not sure how much water your baby needs, call your health-care provider.

Preparing baby's formula



1. **Wash arms and hands** (especially under fingernails) very well with soap and warm running water. Rinse thoroughly and dry with a paper towel.

2. **Clean and sanitize** your work area with a bleach/water mixture.



3. **Wash bottles, nipples, caps, rings and any other utensils** in hot, soapy water. Rinse thoroughly. Squeeze clean water through nipple holes to be sure they are open. Let everything air dry. This step can also be done in a dishwasher.



4. **Prepare formula** by carefully following the label instructions. Use boiled or bottled water until your baby is 4 to 6 months old.



5. **Before opening** formula cans, wash the lids and can opener with hot soapy water. Rinse thoroughly.

RUNNING OUT OF MONEY FOR FOOD?

Contact your local Food Stamp office or go to: dss.mo.gov/fsd/fstamp

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