

Feeding your baby

The best start in life

Baby's immediate needs are to feel safe and secure, and to be able to feed whenever hungry. Holding your baby close to feed and responding to their needs encourages healthy brain connections. Most of this development will occur within the first two years. Responsive parenting will enable your baby to reach their full potential, to be able to form good relationships and communicate well, giving them the best start in life.

Safety advice and sterilising

- The cleaning and sterilising instructions are the same, whether you are using expressed breast milk or infant formula milk.
- All the equipment you use for bottle feeding your baby should be washed in hot soapy water, rinsed and sterilised. You should keep sterilising your feeding equipment until your baby is at least six months old. However, continue to sterilise bottles until your baby is 12 months old.
- Infections (like gastroenteritis) are rare, but, if they do occur, can be very serious.

Making up a bottle of formula milk

- Wipe down the work surfaces you are going to use with a clean cloth.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Read the instructions on the tin or packet to find out how much water and milk powder you will need.
- Always fill the kettle with fresh water from the tap. Do not use bottled mineral water or artificially softened water.
- Boil the kettle and leave it to cool for no longer than 30 minutes. It is important that the water is still hot, otherwise any bacteria in the milk powder may not be destroyed. Always take care, as at 70°C water is still hot enough to scald.
- Always check the temperature before feeding it to your baby.

Health visitor's tips

How to tell your baby is having lots of milk:

- Lots of wet heavy nappies - around six in 24 hours.
- Dirty nappies, two to three soft stools daily until four to six weeks, after which two to three per week.
- Baby is content and settled during and after each feed.
- During a feed, you can hear baby swallowing.
- Weight gain - checked by your health visitor.

- Remember, your milk fulfils all of your baby's needs for around six months. It also reduces the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Cow's milk should not be offered until your baby reaches one year, although it is suitable to use from six months in breakfast cereals.
1. Hold your baby's body close with their nose level with your nipple to help them attach correctly.
 2. Let your baby's head tip back a little so that their top lip can brush against your nipple. This should help your baby to make a wide open mouth.
 3. When your baby's mouth opens wide, **their chin is able to touch your breast first**, with their head tilted, so that their lower lip can make contact with the breast 2-3cm below the nipple.
 4. With their chin firmly touching and their nose clear, their mouth is wide open and there will be much more of the darker skin visible above your baby's top lip than below their bottom lip. Your baby's cheeks will look full and rounded as they feed.

There are lots of different positions for breastfeeding. You just need to check the following:

- **Are your baby's head and body in a straight line?** If not, your baby might not be able to swallow easily.
- **Are you holding your baby close to you?** Support their neck, shoulders and back. They should be able to tilt their head back easily.

Source: DoH, www.lullabytrust.org.uk