

How to prepare your baby's bottle feed



New Safety Advice

Powdered infant formula is not sterile. It may contain bacteria that can make your baby sick. You can reduce the risk to your baby if you prepare and store infant formula safely. This leaflet will help you to prepare your baby's bottle feeds as safely as possible.

Breast is best

Breastmilk is the best and most natural food for your baby. The World Health Organisation and the Department of Health and Children recommend that you breastfeed your baby exclusively for the first six months and then continue to breastfeed as you introduce weaning foods. This is the safest and best way to protect your baby's health.

If you choose not to breastfeed, it is important that you always prepare your baby's bottle feeds safely. If you are switching from breastfeeding or introducing formula feeds for the first time, ask your public health nurse for advice. You should follow the same cleaning and sterilising instructions in this booklet if you are feeding your baby expressed breastmilk in a bottle.

Cleaning, Sterilising and Storing

It is very important that you clean and sterilise all the equipment you use to feed your baby such as bottles, teats and lids. Cleaning and sterilising removes harmful bacteria that could grow in the feed and make your baby sick.

Cleaning



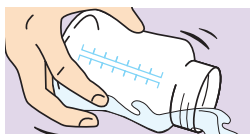
Step 1

Wash your hands well with soap and warm water. Dry using a clean towel.



Step 2

Wash all feeding equipment well in hot soapy water. Use a clean bottle-and-teat brush to scrub the inside and outside of bottles and teats to make sure you remove any leftover milk from the hard-to-reach places.



Step 3

Rinse well in clean running water.

Did you know?

You can use your dishwasher to **clean** feeding equipment that is dishwasher proof. (Check with the manufacturer if you're not sure).

Dishwashers do not sterilise feeding equipment.

Sterilising

Sterilise the clean feeding equipment before you use it. Use one of these methods:



Steam

Steam is the best way to sterilise feeding equipment. You can buy plug-in sterilisers or microwave sterilisers. Always follow the instructions.



Boiling water

Fill a large saucepan with tap water and completely submerge all equipment. Make sure there are no trapped air bubbles. Cover the saucepan, bring to the boil and boil for at least three minutes. Make sure the feeding equipment is fully covered with boiling water at all times. Keep the saucepan covered until you need to use the equipment.



Chemical steriliser

Make up a batch of sterilising liquid (such as Milton) following the instructions. Make sure all equipment is completely covered by the liquid and that there are no trapped air bubbles. Leave the equipment covered for the length of time stated on the instructions.

Storing

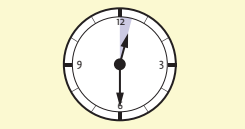
Wash and dry your hands and clean all work surfaces before handling sterilised equipment. Ideally you should use sterilised forceps for handling sterilised equipment so that it does not become dirty again. Put together the feeding bottles if you remove them from the steriliser before you need them. This prevents the inside of the bottle, and the inside and outside of the teat becoming dirty again. If you put them together correctly, the bottles will remain safe to use for 24 hours if you do not open them.

How to prepare a bottle feed



Step 1

Boil fresh tap water in a kettle or covered saucepan.



Step 2

When boiled, leave the water to cool in the kettle or pan. **Cool it for 30 minutes, but no longer.** This will make sure that the water is not too hot, but also that it is no less than 70°C. Using water warmer than 70°C to make up feeds will kill any harmful bacteria that may be present in the formula.



Step 3

Clean the work surface well. Wash your hands with soap and warm water and dry.



Step 4

Read the instructions on the formula's label carefully to find out how much water and how much powder you need.



Step 5

Pour the amount of boiled water you need into a sterile bottle. Take care not to scald yourself.



Step 6

Add the exact amount of formula to the boiled water using the clean scoop provided. Reseal the packaging to protect it from germs and moisture. **Adding too much or too little formula could make your baby sick.**



Step 7

Screw the bottle lid tightly and shake well to mix the contents.



Step 8

To cool the feed quickly, hold the bottle under cold running water or place the bottle in a large bowl of cold water. Make sure that the cold water does not reach above the neck of the bottle.



Step 9

To check the feed is not too hot, shake the bottle and place a drop of liquid on the inside of the wrist – it should feel lukewarm, not hot. Feed your baby.



Step 10

Throw away any feed that your baby has not taken within two hours. If your baby is a slow feeder use a fresh feed after two hours.

Can I store bottle feeds to use later?

It is safest to prepare a fresh feed each time you need one, and to give it to your baby straight away. This is because warm milk provides ideal conditions for bacteria to grow – especially at room temperature. If you need to prepare feeds in advance to use later, make up individual bottles, cool them quickly and place in the back of the fridge (5°C or below). Throw away any feed in the fridge that you have not used within 24 hours.

Did you know?

You don't have to warm formula before feeding your baby.

How do I warm up refrigerated bottle feeds?

- Remove the bottle of feed from the fridge just before you need it.
- To warm it, place it in a bowl of warm water, making sure the level of the water is below the neck of the bottle. You can also use a bottle-warmer.
- Warm it for no more than 15 minutes.
- Check the temperature of the milk by dripping a little onto the inside of your wrist. It should feel lukewarm, not hot.
- Throw away any feed that your baby has not taken within two hours.

Warning

Never use a microwave to re-warm feeds. Microwaves heat unevenly and may cause 'hot spots' that could scald your baby's mouth.

Short journeys

You can travel with made-up bottles if the journey will be less than two hours in total and you can keep the feeds cold while travelling.

1. Before your journey, prepare feeds as normal, cool quickly and place in a fridge at 5°C or below.
2. Just before you leave home, remove the cold feeds from the fridge and place them in an insulated cool bag with ice packs.
3. When you arrive, place the feeds in a fridge as soon as you can. Re-warm a feed when you need one.

Longer journeys

If the journey will be longer than two hours, or if you have no way of keeping the feeds cold, it is not safe to bring made-up bottles.

The safest option is to bring the powder with you and prepare a feed as normal using water that is hotter than 70°C. Cool it quickly and feed your baby right away (see pages 4 and 5).

If you will not be able to boil water when you are out, you could fill a thermos flask with boiling water to bring with you. If you fill the flask and seal it, the water will stay above 70°C for several hours. You can use it to make up a feed when you need to. Wash flasks well and rinse with boiling water before you fill **them** with the boiling water that will be used to make up the feed.

Another very safe option is to use cartons of liquid formula. You can buy these in chemists and supermarkets. You do not need to keep them in a fridge or heat them up before feeding your baby.

What about crèches?

Childcare centres such as crèches rarely prepare infant formula. Parents must prepare all the feeds their babies will need at home and bring these to the crèche each day. If you need to do this:

- Prepare feeds using water no less than 70°C, and cool quickly (see pages 4 and 5).
- Bring the feeds to the crèche in a cool bag with ice-packs.
- Label each of your baby's feeds carefully so they don't get mixed up with other feeds in the crèche.
- Crèche staff should place the feeds in a dedicated fridge as soon as you arrive at the crèche. Feeds cannot be stored for longer than 24 hours.
- The temperature of the fridge should be 5°C or less. The fridge should have a thermometer so staff can check the temperature and adjust it if needed.
- Take home all feeding bottles when you collect your baby and throw away any leftover feed.
- Clean all bottles thoroughly at home and sterilise for the next day (see pages 2 and 3).

