



## Breastfeeding VS. Bottle Feeding

Making the decision to breastfeed is a personal matter. It's also one that's likely to draw strong opinions from friends and family.

Many medical authorities, including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, strongly recommend breastfeeding. But you and your baby are unique, and the decision is up to you. This overview of breastfeeding can help you decide.

### What Are the Benefits of Breastfeeding for Your Baby?

Breast milk provides the ideal nutrition for infants. It has a nearly perfect mix of vitamins, protein, and fat -- everything your baby needs to grow. And it's all provided in a form more easily digested than infant formula. Breast milk contains antibodies that help your baby fight off viruses and bacteria. Breastfeeding lowers your baby's risk of having asthma or allergies. Plus, babies who are breastfed exclusively for the first 6 months, without any formula, have fewer ear infections, respiratory illnesses, and bouts of diarrhea. They also have fewer hospitalizations and trips to the doctor.

Breastfeeding has been linked to higher IQ scores in later childhood in some studies. What's more, the physical closeness, skin-to-skin touching, and eye contact all help your baby bond with you and feel secure. Breastfed infants are more likely to gain the right amount of weight as they grow rather than become overweight children. The AAP says breastfeeding also plays a role in the prevention of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome). It's been thought to lower the risk of diabetes, obesity, and certain cancers as well, but more research is needed.

### Are There Breastfeeding Benefits for the Mother?

Breastfeeding burns extra calories, so it can help you lose pregnancy weight faster. It releases the hormone oxytocin, which helps your uterus return to its pre-pregnancy size and may reduce uterine bleeding after birth. Breastfeeding also lowers your risk of breast and ovarian cancer. It may lower your risk of osteoporosis, too.

Since you don't have to buy and measure formula, sterilize nipples, or warm bottles, it saves you time and money. It also gives you regular time to relax quietly with your newborn as you bond.

### Why Do Some Women Choose Not to Breastfeed?

Some women don't want to breastfeed in public.

Some prefer the flexibility of knowing that a father or any caregiver can bottle-feed the baby any time.

Babies tend to digest formula more slowly than breast milk, so bottle feedings may not be as frequent as breastfeeding sessions.

The time commitment, and being "on-call" for feedings every few hours of a newborn's life, isn't feasible for every woman. Some women fear that breastfeeding will ruin the appearance of their breasts. But most breast surgeons would argue that age, gravity, genetics, and lifestyle factors like smoking all change the shape of a woman's breasts more than breastfeeding does.



## Tips to Choose Baby Formula

When you stock your nursery with diapers and wipes, you may want to think about whether you want to get some formula.

Doctors prefer that moms breastfeed -- and breastfeeding is best. But if you can't breastfeed all the time, or at all, then start by buying just enough formula to last for a week or two. That way, you can see how your baby likes it, before you commit to buying a lot.

Although formula doesn't contain everything found in breast milk, it has many vitamins and other nutrients that babies need, as well as calories.

## Formula from Cow's Milk and Soy

Your baby's doctor should suggest a formula that's right for your little one. Most doctors recommend that babies drink one made from cow's milk. Most formulas available today are made from that.

If a baby has a milk allergy or the formula doesn't agree with them, doctors may suggest formula made from soy milk.

## Other Formulas

If allergies run in your family, your doctor may advise using a "hydrolyzed" formula, which is easier to digest. It may also make it less likely that your baby will get allergies.

Some formulas also have probiotics, the "good" bacteria that live in the gut and are in some yogurts. Probiotics give formula-fed babies the same bacteria that breastfed babies have, to keep their intestines healthier.

Some formulas have prebiotics, which are carbs that help the good bacteria stay and grow in your baby's gut. Ask your doctor what your baby needs.

## Iron for Baby

Pick a product that's fortified with iron, unless your doctor says not to. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all babies who aren't breastfed should get formula with iron until they're 1 year old. It helps prevent anemia, which is low iron levels in their blood.



## Best Advice for Formula Feeding

- **Use tap water if it's safe, or bottled water if you're not sure.** You can also use water that you've boiled for at least a minute and cooled. If you're mixing powder or liquid concentrate with water, pay attention to the measurements -- they're important.
- **Don't warm formula in the microwave,** which heats things unevenly. Instead, place the bottle in a container of warm water for a few minutes, or run it under a hot tap.
- Tilt the bottle upward, filling the entire nipple with formula. This helps to keep your baby from swallowing air.
- **Your baby should drink the bottle within an hour after you fix it.** Throw away any unused formula. You can mix bottles ahead of time and store them in the fridge for 24 hours.
- **Ask your doctor how much your baby should eat and how often.** Most infants need 2-4 ounces per feed, depending on their weight and age.

If your baby vomits or has diarrhea often, isn't gaining weight well, or if you think the formula doesn't agree with him, ask the doctor if you should switch to another type of formula.

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