

❖ **FORMULA FEEDING**

It can be a matter of trial and error to find the right formula for your child and clearly there are no hard and fast rules as to when to stop breast feeding, how to wean yourself off and which formula to start and stick with...all in the fun of parenthood right?!

How do you know when your baby is hungry?

Although each baby is different, the common signs of being hungry include;

- ✓ Move their head around from side to side
- ✓ Opening their mouth
- ✓ Putting their hands in their mouth
- ✓ Pursing their lips to suck
- ✓ Muzzling on your breasts

How much should baby normally drink?

Although guidelines are available, I have seen so many parents get worked up and anxious over because their child is having less or more than what is recommended. They may feed more when they are having a growth spurt or less if they are teething or unwell. So as long as they are weighed and measured regularly to make sure they are growing steadily...then just use the guideline as a guide... not a be-all and end-all Bible to follow;

So the table below is simply a 'guide' set by NHMRC of Australia 2003:

<u>AGE</u>	<u>AMT PER KG OF WEIGHT DAILY</u>
DAY 1	30 ML
DAY 2	60 ML
DAY 3	60-90 ML
DAY 4	120 ML
DAY 5-3 MONTHS	150 ML (SOME NEED UP TO 180-200 ML)
3-6 MONTHS	120 ML
6-12 MONTHS	90-100 ML
1-2 YEARS	90 ML

When do children 'normally' have growth spurts?

I hate the word 'normal' but growth spurts can occur at the following age ranges as a guide for when they may drink more and sleep more than usual;

They can have a growth spurt at

- *7-14 days
- *between 3 to 6 weeks
- *4 months
- *6 months

How do you prepare bottles for a formula fed baby?

Most formulas are based on cow's milk and unless there is a history or knowledge of allergies they are tolerated by most babies. Normally regular cow's milk should not be given until 12 months of age as the baby will not be able to digest it and the nutrients in there so are not suitable for a child younger than this.

You need to boil water in a kettle or saucepan and then let it cool for no more than 30 minutes and use this to make up the formula.

When heating a bottle, it is best not to do it in a microwave as it does not heat it evenly and can burn the baby's mouth. You should place the bottle in a saucepan of warm water until it has heated and then check the temperature of the milk on the inside of your wrist. You can cool down the bottle by running under water or put into a cold bowl of water.

If you need to make the formula in advance then you can keep it in the fridge but only for 24 hours. If you are going out it is better to take portions of the powder and keep boiled cooled water or do it somewhere.

How do you clean the bottles and teats?

Wash the teats in hot soapy water with a bottle brush and rinse well. The bottles should be put into a cold saucepan brought to the boil and then kept boiling for 5 minutes. Allow it to cool before giving it to your baby so they don't burn themselves!

Although dearer, if you have a steriliser for your bottles, dummies and whatever else they put in their mouths this is easier still!

What are the main differences between formulas...it's so confusing!?

Essentially there are two types of proteins in cows based milk which is what infant formula is derived from;

***WHEY:** is the watery part of the milk that separates from the curd and is easiest to digest and

***CASEIN:** is the thicker curd part that is used to make cheese which is not as easily digested.

As a general rule, younger babies under 4 months of age should have a more WHEY dominant formula as it is much easier for them to digest and obtain the best nutrients from their feed. Older children are better off with a more CASEIN dominant formula as it will keep them fuller for longer but it may be associated with a higher incidence of allergies if they are susceptible.

If a child is allergic or intolerant to cow's milk derived proteins, they may develop;

- × a rash
- × constipation
- × diarrhoea
- × May continually vomit their feed back-up.

In this instance you should use the HA/hypoallergenic type of protein as they contain partially broken down proteins that are more tolerated and easier to digest.

Soy or goats milk formula do not contain whey or casein but are still similar to cow milk so may still give an allergic reaction or intolerance. Some studies have shown in as many as 50 per cent of children allergic can have the same reaction to soy or goats milk. However it is certainly another option to try.

Formulas that contain probiotics may help to assist in your child's digestion and may support a healthy immune system. Some now also contain omega fatty acids to improve memory, concentration and skin integrity in your child. Most formulas contain a large amount of vitamins and minerals as well to provide them with nutrients their body require.

If your child does projectile vomit their feeds, then before changing their formula perhaps add Karicare Food Thickener which is suitable from birth. If you mix it up and give it to the baby before their feed then it helps to keep the food in the stomach and not all over you!

If your baby has Acid-reflux (where the acid causes burning and pain in their stomachs), then try to use Infant Gaviscon which can be given before their feeds to help neutralise the acid as well as having a thickening agent to keep the food in the stomach where it belongs.

Also, if you are changing from breast-feeding to formula feeding, then babies can often get constipation because of the higher protein levels in the formula. Sometimes they will get used to it on their own as their body learns how to digest it, other times you may need to give them Coloxyl drops for a few days to help soften the stools and make it easier for them! Do not increase the amount of water to make up their feed or use less number of scoops to make it 'less dilute'; otherwise they won't get the full nutrients that they need.

If this still doesn't help, then try switching to a HA formula as this partially digested proteins can be easier to digest. Otherwise, try using Novolac Constipation formula, as it has been specially formulated with 60% Whey dominant protein to improve constipation.

If you are unsure about anything, then chat to a baby nurse who often comes into pharmacies or medical centres as a service. Otherwise speak to your doctor or paediatrician to work out the best option for your little one!