

Provider Information

FF-FS FORMULA FEEDING SKILLS

OUTCOME: The parents/family will understand the skills for successful formula feeding during a baby's first year.

STANDARDS:

1. Discuss that formula feeding a premature infant is different from feeding a term infant.
 - a. A premature infant may be sleepy at feeding times, may not be strong enough to drink enough milk to sustain growth, and may have a difficult time swallowing and breathing at the same time.
 - b. The skills to promote successful formula feeding in premature infants are, for example, sit the baby up, use chin and cheek support, exercise the infant's mouth to strengthen muscles.
2. Explain the importance of selecting an age appropriate nipple that is comfortable to baby's mouth in order to feed formula at a rate that the baby can manage.
3. Discuss infant feeding techniques, such as:
 - a. tooth decay, and increased risk of ear infection
4. Explain that the choice between plastic and glass bottles is up to the parents. Glass is easy to clean, dries quickly, and holds temperature better than plastic.
5. Explain the types of formulas available.
 - a. Encourage a formula that meets the baby's individual needs.
 - b. Discuss that most infants require iron fortified formulas for brain growth.
6. Discuss signs and symptoms of formula intolerance:
 - a. Frequent stomachaches or vomiting, cough, runny nose and wheezing, skin itching, and rash are examples of formula intolerance or allergy.
 - b. Fussing, spitting up, pulling off the nipple, or baby not wanting to eat during or after feeding may not necessarily be a problem with formula intolerance.

Highlights of Formula Feeding Choices

- Safe preparation and feeding of infant formula
- Demonstrate and verify safe preparation and feeding of baby formula
- Education on feeding choices: formula or breast
- Discuss reasons for the mother's request to not breastfeed and address the concerns raised
- No restrictions should be placed on the frequency or length of feeding,

- Understand that newborns usually feed a minimum of eight times in 24 hours,
- Recognize cues that infants use to signal readiness to begin and end feeds,
- Understand that physical contact and nourishment are both important.

Breastfeeding is best! But.....

Infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life to achieve the best growth, development and health. There are, however, instances where breast milk is not available, where the mother is unable to breastfeed, where they have made an informed decision not to breastfeed, or where breastfeeding is not appropriate:

- The mother is taking medication that is contraindicated for breastfeeding
- the mother is HIV-positive
- Very low-birth-weight babies may not be able to breastfeed directly
- Expressed breast milk may not be available at all or available in insufficient quantities.

Is it okay to feed my baby formula?

Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for your baby. Some women are unable or choose not to breastfeed. In these cases, baby formulas are an option. Baby formulas are made to meet babies' nutritional needs.

How do I choose the right formula for my baby?

Your doctor may recommend using an iron-fortified formula. Iron-fortified contain extra iron. Some formulas have very little iron or none at all.

Some formulas are made from soymilk instead of cow's milk. If your baby seems to be allergic to formula made from cow's milk, your doctor may suggest using a soymilk formula.

If you are not breastfeeding, use infant formula during the first year of your baby's life. Do not give your baby regular cow's milk (regular cow's milk is the milk you drink) and regular soymilk are not the same as infant formula made from cow's milk or from soymilk. Regular cow's milk and regular soymilk do not contain all of the nutrients that your baby needs to grow and develop. Babies younger than one-year old who drink regular cow's milk or regular soymilk are at risk for problems associated with low iron. Iron is important to your baby's growth and development.

How often should I feed my baby?

Feed your baby as often as your baby wants to be fed.

This will be 8 to 12 times a day or more in the beginning. Your baby may want to be fed less often as your baby grows, and is able to take more formula at each feeding.

How often your baby wants to feed will also change over time as your baby goes through growth spurts. Growth spurts typically occur at about 2 and 6 weeks of age and again at about 3 and 6 months of age.

Baby formula is sold in several forms:

Ready-to-use This is the most expensive kind of formula, but no mixing is necessary.

Concentrated liquid This is a less expensive formula. You mix the formula liquid with an equal part of water.

Powder This is the least expensive formula. You mix one level scoop of powdered formula with 2 ounces of water and stir well.

How much formula should I give my baby?

Most babies need 2.5 ounces of formula per pound of body weight each day. This means that an 8-pound baby may drink about 20 ounces of formula a day. This is just an estimate. The most important thing when feeding your baby is to pay attention to your baby's cues. Other than crying, signs that your baby may be hungry include smacking his or her lips, sucking and rooting (turning his or her head toward your hand when you touch his or her face).

Each baby's nutritional needs are different and change overtime. Your baby is probably getting enough formula if your baby:

- Acts satisfied after each feeding.
- Gains weight constantly after the first 3 to 7 days after birth. Your baby may lose a little weight during the first week after being born.
- Has about 6 to 8 wet diapers a day.
- Has about 2 to 5 or more stools a day at first, and then has 2 or less stools a day as your baby grows. Your baby's stools will be runny at first.

What is the right way to mix formula?

The most important thing to know is that you must follow the directions on the formula container exactly. Always measure carefully and never add extra water to the formula. Wash your hands before preparing the formula. Use safe drinking water to mix the baby formula.

How do I know if I need to switch to a different formula?

Sometimes it may be necessary to change the kind of formula you give to your baby. If your baby is always fussy, needs more iron, or has certain food allergies, your doctor may suggest you change your baby's formula to a different kind. Some of the signs that your baby is allergic to the type of formula you are feeding your baby are:

- Dry, red and scaly skin
- Diarrhea, excessive gas or very loose watery stools

- Extreme fatigue or weakness
- Forceful vomiting
- Crying or fussiness after a feeding, excessive gas and very loose, watery stools.

Changing your baby's formula is not always the answer if you are worried about your baby's stool habits or about the color or consistency of your baby's stool. How often babies soil their diapers, and the color and consistency of their stool is different from baby to baby. Talk with your doctor before changing your baby's formula--you may not need to change it after all.

How do I warm my baby's bottles?

It is okay for the formula to be cool or room temperature. If your baby seems to prefer warm formula, you can put the filled bottle in a container of warm water and let it stand for a few minutes. Check the temperature of the formula on your skin before feeding it to your baby; to be sure it is not too hot. The formula should only be lukewarm.

Do not heat bottles in the microwave. Microwaves heat foods and liquids unevenly, and this can cause hot spots in the formula that can burn your baby.

Feeding your baby

Do not prop the bottles on a pillow or blanket. Every time you feed your baby - hold your baby as you give your baby the bottle. Propping the bottle increases the risk of the baby choking on the formula, increases tooth decay, and increased risk of ear infection.

How do I clean and sterilize bottles?

Sterilize bottles and nipples before you use them for the first time. You can do this by putting them in boiling water for 5 minutes. After that first time, you probably do not need to sterilize them again. Instead, wash bottle, nipples and caps in hot, soapy water. Rinse them carefully to remove any soap residue. You can also run them through the dishwasher, which kills more germs than washing by hand.

Click here for a patient education handout on [Formula Feeding](#)

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