

Smart Choices . . .

# Preparing Formula for Your Baby

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## When you prepare formula, think about cleanliness and safety.

From the time you purchase formula until it is consumed by your baby, it should be handled carefully. Follow the practices in this publication to keep baby's formula safe.

### Purchase formula carefully

- Choose formula in cans that are not dented or damaged. Cans should not have bulging or pinched bottoms or tops. They should not be leaking or have rust spots.
- Buy and use formula by the date shown on the package.

### Clean everything thoroughly

- Begin with your hands. Wash your hands for 20 seconds in warm water with soap before preparing formula and before feeding your baby.
- Wash bottles, nipples, rings, caps, jars and spoons in hot water with soap and rinse well in hot water. In addition, rinsing them immediately after each feeding will make them easier to clean when you need to use them again.
- Check with your health-care provider about the need to sterilize bottles. If you plan to sterilize, boil bottles and other pieces in hot water for 5 minutes.
- Rinse tops of cans and the blade of your can opener before opening.
- If you use disposable liners, throw them away after one use.



### Prepare formula safely

Formula can be purchased concentrated, powdered or ready-to-feed. Concentrated and powdered forms need to be mixed with water. **Always mix the formula according to directions on the package.** Too little water is not healthy for your baby's immature kidneys and digestive system. Too much means your baby may not get the calories and nutrients he needs to grow.

Normally, you mix water with formula as follows:

- For concentrate, mix 1 ounce of water with 1 ounce of formula. (Always shake the can well before opening.)
- For powder, mix one level scoop of powder for every 2 ounces of water. The scoop comes with the can of formula.

Before adding water, be sure it is safe. If your water comes from a water plant, boil it for 1 to 2 minutes, let it cool then mix with formula. In the case of well water, check with your health-care provider or nutritionist before using.

Depending on the age of your home, your water may contain lead, which is harmful to your baby. If your home was built before 1978, check with your local water supplier or health department to find out if there is lead in your water. When a test shows you have lead in your water, you can reduce your baby's exposure by using cold water when mixing formula. If your water has been sitting in your plumbing lines for more than six hours, run the cold-water faucet for at least two to three minutes. If you are concerned about the safety of your water, check with your health-care provider or nutritionist about using bottled water.



## Store formula properly

Store unopened cans of formula in a cool, dry place.

It is best to prepare formula one bottle at a time, as you need it. This allows less time for harmful microorganisms to grow. Once you have prepared a bottle, always refrigerate it unless you plan to feed your baby within 30 minutes. If your baby does not finish all of the bottle within 1 hour, discard the remaining formula. Do not save it for the next feeding.



Store opened cans of liquid formula in the refrigerator at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below for up to 48 hours. Cover opened cans with a plastic cap or wrap. Cover opened cans of powder formulas with the plastic cap that comes with the can and store them in a cool, dry place. Use powder formula within one month after opening the can.

## Does formula need to be warmed?

You only need to remove some of the chill. During the hot months, some babies may prefer cool formula. It really depends on your baby.



If you do warm a bottle of formula, do not warm it in the microwave. It heats the formula unevenly and hot spots may burn your baby.

The best way to remove the chill is to run hot water over the bottle or place it in a pan of hot water for a few minutes. Shake the bottle well before feeding.

## Food Safety and Your Baby

Babies are more likely than adults to get sick from contaminated formula or food. Any time you are traveling or away from home, keep bottles cold. Store them in a container with ice—not the diaper bag. Harmful bacteria can multiply in as little as 20 minutes!

For more information on feeding children, contact your local Extension office

Visit the UT Extension Web site at  
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