

Formula Feeding Facts



The health benefits of breastfeeding are well-documented. However, formula feeding with a bottle can also be a healthy choice. Some mothers formula feed right away when the infant is born, or start after they breastfeed for a period of time. The most important thing is that the infant is loved and well-cared for, no matter what the feeding choice.

Reasons for Formula Feeding:

1. Infant has a poor sucking reflex (common in premature infants).
2. Breastfeeding is painful for the mother.
3. Mother is concerned that the infant is not getting enough milk.
4. Mother has tried to breastfeed but has had difficulty.
5. Infant must be separated from mother for a long period of time (for medical reasons, for example).
6. Mother must return to work.
7. Mother has a health problem requiring medication that should not be given to the nursing infant.

What is Formula?

Formula is a liquid product for infants designed to be as nutritionally close to breast milk as possible. Formula makers cannot duplicate the resistance to infection that breast milk offers, but formula does give nutritional nourishments for a growing infant.

Never give an infant cow's milk—it is not recommended until after the infant is one year old. Cow's milk is meant for calves. It is high in muscle-building protein that is perfect for calves, not human infants.

Types of Formula

Formula can be powdered, concentrated liquid, or ready-to-use liquid. The content is basically the same. The differences are ease of preparation, cost, and storage. Powdered formula must be mixed with water, concentrated liquid must be diluted with water, and ready-to-feed liquid needs no preparation but is the most expensive.

Ready-to-feed formulas come in large cans, which you pour into bottles. Ready-to-feed formulas must be used immediately or be refrigerated after mixing or opening, and used within 24 to 48 hours (check the labels). Many experts suggest discarding them after 24 hours.