

Best Practices for Feeding Breast Milk or Formula to Babies

Relationships are the Heart of Quality Care

- ◆ Use feeding time to develop your relationship with the baby.

Health & Safety Information

It's important to follow safe food handling, preparation and storage practices in child care programs.

- ◆ Caring for infants requires special attention to appropriate health and safety practices.

Create a Backup Supply Of Milk

If parents want you to feed the baby breast milk from a bottle, ask Mom to bring extra milk in case she is delayed or the baby gets hungry. Keep the breast milk in the freezer or refrigerator so it won't spoil.

Tips For Helping Nursing Mothers

- ◆ Create a quiet, comfortable, private place: sink for mom to wash her hands, comfortable chair, pillow, footstool, glass of water for Mom to drink.
- ◆ Schedule baby's last feeding so he will be hungry and ready to breastfeed when Mom arrives.

Storing Breast Milk

- ◆ Label the bottles with the baby's name and the date and time the milk was collected.
- ◆ Store milk in plastic bottles. Glass bottles can break.
- ◆ Each bottle should hold just enough for one feeding.
- ◆ Freeze small bottles with one or two ounces of breast milk for extra meals.
- ◆ Use a cooler and ice packs to bring the fresh or frozen milk to the child care program.

How to Thaw Frozen Breast Milk

- ◆ Thaw milk in the refrigerator. Don't thaw at room temperature (for example, on the kitchen counter.)
- ◆ Hold it under cool (not cold) running water.
- ◆ Frozen breast milk can be stored in an air-tight container in the freezer for up to 3 months but it must always be at 0° F or below.
- ◆ Refrigerate thawed milk at 40°F or below and use within 24 hours.
- ◆ After 48 hours, throw out all unused milk.
- ◆ Always use the oldest milk first
- ◆ Don't refreeze milk.

It is normal for breast milk to separate when stored, just swirl it gently to remix.

Warming Breast Milk and Formula

Some children prefer warm milk or formula. Be *very careful* when warming bottles. Overheated milk can seriously burn the baby.

Microwave Ovens – A Special Warning

Microwave ovens are **not appropriate** for warming breast milk or formula. Microwave heating can cause "hot spots" that can burn the baby, and can damage protective factors in breast milk.

- ◆ Hold the bottle under warm (not hot) running warm water.
- ◆ Set the bottle in a pan of warm water.
- ◆ Warm only as much breast milk or formula as you will use for a feeding.
- ◆ Test the temperature by shaking a few drops on the inside of your wrist.
- ◆ Don't heat breast milk on a stove or in a microwave. Stoves and microwaves also damage special substances in breast milk that protect the baby's health.



Infant Formula

- ◆ Always use infant formula before the “use before” or expiration date on the container.
- ◆ Don't freeze formula because it can separate.
- ◆ You can keep open liquid concentrate or ready-to-use formula in the refrigerator for up to two days if the cans are tightly covered.
- ◆ Label the bottles with the baby's name and the date.

Never Prop A Bottle Or Leave A Bottle In The Crib With A Baby.

- ◆ The baby might choke.
- ◆ The baby might drink spoiled milk.
- ◆ The baby's teeth will decay because the bottle will drip into the baby's mouth all night.

After the Baby is Fed

- ◆ Use prepared formula within two days after mixing.
- ◆ Throw milk, formula, or food away if it has been out of the refrigerator for more than two hours.
- ◆ Discard any formula or milk the baby hasn't finished after feeding. Germs from the baby's mouth get into the milk and can cause it to spoil, even if it's in the refrigerator.
- ◆ Wash the bottle immediately with hot, soapy water.

Electric Bottle Warmers – A Special Warning

- ◆ **Make sure the bottle warmer is inaccessible.**
- ◆ Prevent babies from receiving burns or bruises from bumping into them, tipping them over, or tripping on the cord.
- ◆ Make sure you do not overheat the milk or formula in the bottle warmer.
- ◆ Prevent babies from drinking overheated milk or formula.
- ◆ Prevent babies from drinking milk or formula that has lost its nutrients.

Sources

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