



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

FORMULA FEEDING YOUR INFANT DURING COVID-19



You might have some questions about feeding your infant during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we have answered some of the most common questions below. Still not sure about something? We've also included a list of helpful resources that provide additional detail, and we encourage you to reach out to your health care provider if there's anything else you want to ask.

It's important to do whatever you can to stay safe and avoid COVID-19 infection. If you are pregnant or have infants and/or other children, you should take the same recommended precautions as the general public. The following additional information is specific to mothers and those who are caring for infants:

Infant feeding

What should I know about formula feeding?

- If you're not sure about something, it's great to ask questions and ask for help! Ask your community health nurse, nurse practitioner, doctor, midwife, or a public health nurse or a dietitian with the health authority. There are no dumb questions!
- Continue feeding your infant with the formula that has been working for you so far. Try to have enough formula on hand for three to four weeks, and to restock when you still have at least one week of formula left, as supplies may be lower than usual.
- Formula is recommended for use until 12 months, but if your infant is nine months or older, and eating a variety of iron-rich foods, you can introduce whole cow's milk (3.25% fat) as long as your child is not allergic to it.
- Children under two years old should not be given any other type of cow's milk (1%, 2% or skim) and should not be given non-dairy beverages like almond, cashew or oat milk.

What if I can't find the formula I generally use?

- Your local pharmacy, grocery store or baby supply store may be out of your preferred formula due to people buying and storing more at this time. Try calling ahead to find out when they will be restocking.
- Your health centre, pharmacist or doctor may also be able to help you find what you need.
- Switch to a different brand or type of formula (ready-to-feed, liquid concentrate or powder).

- Formula comes in various forms and they are all okay to use.
- Any formula labelled for use from birth (0-6 months) is safe for your baby and the brand does not matter.
- Generic formula will meet your baby's nutritional needs just the same as any brand-name formula.
- If you are choosing a different brand, pick one that is similar to the one you have been using. For example, if you use a cow's-milk-based formula, choose another one that is also cow's-milk-based. A+1 and Step 1 are both for newborn babies. Your baby does not need additions like Omega 3 fat (DHA) or Omega 6 (ARA).
- If your baby is on a special formula, talk with your health care provider about switching to another brand. There are different brands for these special formulas.
- If you are not sure, call 811 (not 911, which is only for emergencies) and ask to talk with a dietitian (someone who specializes in food and healthy eating).

Should I make my own formula at home?

- Homemade formula is not safe for your baby. It does not provide enough of what your baby needs to grow strong (like fat, iron and vitamins) and can contain ingredients that are hard for them to digest or are even dangerous. Remember, food meant for older children and adults is not always good for babies.
- Please refer to the question above to help you figure out what to do to find the right formula. You can also talk with your health care provider for help. It is okay to ask questions and it is okay to get help.

I am breastfeeding and formula feeding. What should I do?

- If possible, breastfeed for the majority of your baby's feeds. This will help to maintain your supply (or even increase your supply) and reduce your baby's need for formula. Plus, your baby will get more of the benefits of breastmilk, such as the protection it provides against illnesses. For great information about breastfeeding and formula supplementation, see pages 104 and 105 of the book [Baby's Best Chance](#).

How do I keep my baby safe while bottlefeeding?

- Sterilize bottles in boiling water before use.
- Wash your hands with hot water and soap before and after touching your baby.
- If you are sick, wear a face mask when you are near your baby.
- Close contact will help your baby stay healthy and happy, so hold your baby during feeds and feed them in a room away from other people.
- Limit the number of people holding and caring for your baby to one or two. The fewer people touching, holding and breathing on your baby, the safer your baby will be. This may be difficult!
- If possible, focus on looking after your baby and let others help with household chores and caring for other children and family members.

How can I make sure the formula is safe?

- If you decide to buy directly from formula companies, be careful. There may be hidden costs or you may get talked into buying things you do not need (like more expensive types of formula).
- Never use expired formula.
- Formula should not be diluted with extra water to make the supply last longer, as this is unsafe for your baby.
- Always carefully read and follow the instructions that come with the formula. For powdered formula, different brands use different-size scoops to measure the required amounts. For concentrated liquid formulas, the amount of water to add may vary.
- As powdered formula is not sterile, you must boil water for a full two minutes (the two minutes starts when the water is fully boiling) and add the powder when the water is still over 70 degrees (about 30 minutes after it boiled). This to make sure any bacteria in the powder is killed. (If the boiled water has sat for longer than 30 minutes, you will need to reheat it before adding the powder.) Add the appropriate number of scoops on top of the water and mix well.
- If someone is helping you prepare formula for your baby, make sure that person has no signs of sickness and has not been near people who are sick. Ideally the same person should always make the formula.

Cleaning baby bottles is even more important during COVID-19!

- Always wash your hands before cleaning baby bottles.
- Always rinse bottles as soon as your baby is finished feeding.
- Only people who are healthy and not sick should clean the bottles.
- Take extra care to properly sterilize the bottles and keep them safe for your baby. Wash each part with soap and water and then place all parts in a pot of water that is already boiling and continue to boil for two minutes to sterilize them.
- See page 108 of [Baby's Best Chance](#) for tips on how to clean and sterilize baby bottles.



For additional information, click on the following links:

- [Infant formula: What you need to know \(2019\).](#)
- [HealthLink BC's Baby's Best Chance, 7th Edition \(2019\).](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control website - Information on the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)
- [FNHA website - Information on the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)
- [HealthLink BC's Feeding Your Baby Formula: Before You Start.](#)

Taken from Baby's Best Chance 7th edition 2019.