

# Bottle feeding



## This leaflet contains new information that will help you to bottle feed your baby as safely as possible

This new advice is based on guidance from the Department of Health and the Food Standards Agency. It may differ from what you have done before if you have older children, but to minimise any risk it is recommended that you follow the advice in this leaflet.

### New safety advice

When using powdered infant formula milk, it is very important to ensure that it is prepared in the safest way possible. Powdered infant formula milk is not a sterile product, and even though tins and packets of milk powder are sealed, they can contain bacteria such as *Enterobacter sakazakii* and more rarely *Salmonella*.

If the feed is not prepared safely, these bacteria can cause infections – and even though these are extremely rare, when they do happen they can be life-threatening. Therefore, it is important to make up the formula milk with water at a temperature of around 70°C, which will kill these bacteria. In practice this means boiling the kettle and leaving it to cool for no longer than 30 minutes. Very young babies are at most risk, and it is better to use commercially sterile, liquid ready-to-feed products for premature or low birth weight babies.

Because it's impossible to completely destroy all the bacteria that may be present, it's also important to make up a fresh bottle for each feed. Bacteria multiply rapidly at room temperature and can even survive and multiply slowly in some fridges, so storing formula milk for any length of time increases the risk.



All the equipment used for feeding your baby needs to be sterilised.

By sterilising your feeding equipment, washing your hands and keeping the preparation area clean, you will reduce the chance of your baby getting sickness and diarrhoea.

Formula milk does not protect your baby against infection as breastmilk does.

# How to sterilise

The following cleaning and sterilising instructions apply whether you are using expressed breastmilk or infant formula milk.

## Clean and rinse

Clean the bottle and teat in hot soapy water as soon as possible after a feed, using a clean bottle brush.

Rinse all your equipment in clean running cold water before sterilising.



# Cold water sterilising

Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Change the sterilising solution every 24 hours.

Leave feeding equipment in sterilising solution for at least 30 minutes.

Make sure there is no air trapped in the bottles or teats when putting them in the sterilising solution.

Keep all the equipment under the solution with a floating cover.



# Steam sterilising

Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Make sure the openings of the bottles and teats are facing down in the steriliser.

Any equipment not used straight away should be re-sterilised before use.

# Making up a feed



Before making up a feed, clean and disinfect the surface you are going to use.



It's really important that you **WASH YOUR HANDS**.



If you are using a cold water steriliser, shake off any excess solution from the bottle and the teat or rinse the bottle with cooled boiled water from the kettle (not the tap).



Stand the bottle on a clean surface.

Keep the teat and cap on the upturned lid of the steriliser. Avoid putting them on the work surface.

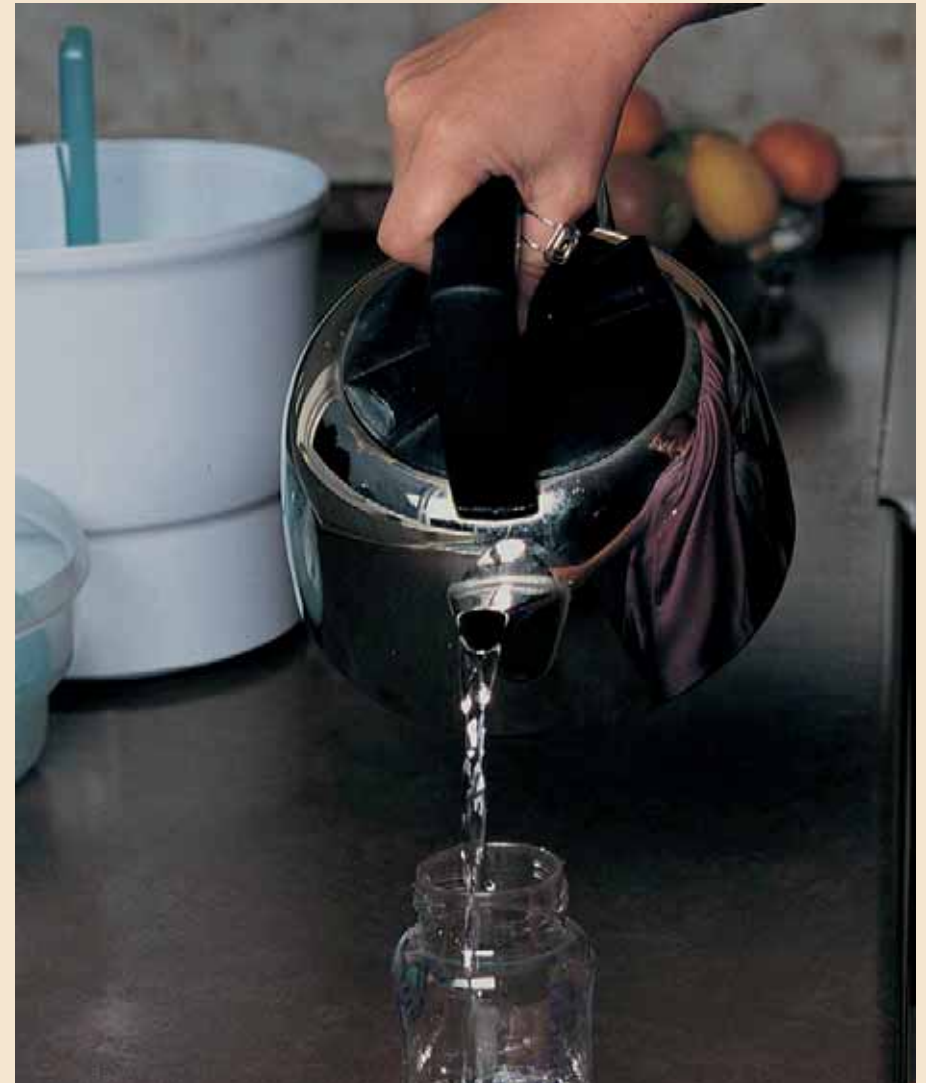
## When making up infant formula milk

Use fresh tap water (not bottled water) to fill the kettle. After it has boiled let the water cool for no more than 30 minutes. Do not use artificially softened water or repeatedly boiled water. If you have to use bottled water, you will still need to boil it.

It is important that the water is still hot otherwise any bacteria in the milk powder may not be destroyed.

Always put the cooled boiled water in the bottle first.

**NB: Always take care as at 70°C, water is still hot enough to scald.**





**Always check the water level is correct. Failure to follow the manufacturer's instructions may make your baby ill.**



Loosely fill the scoop with milk powder and level it off using the flat edge of a clean, dry knife or the leveller provided. Add the number of scoops of milk powder specified by the manufacturer's preparation instructions on the container of the milk powder. It is important to use only the scoop that is enclosed with the milk powder.

Making up a feed with too much powder can give your baby constipation and can cause your baby to become dehydrated, while too little powder may not provide your baby with sufficient nourishment.



**Add the milk powder to the water.  
Do not add sugar or cereals to the feed in  
the bottle.**



Holding the edge of the teat, put it on the bottle.  
Screw the retaining ring onto the bottle.

Cover the teat with a cap. Shake the bottle until the  
powder is dissolved.

Storing formula milk that has been made up may  
increase the chance of your baby becoming ill. It is  
always better to feed your baby freshly made up  
formula milk.

**NB: Always take care as at 70°C,  
water is still hot enough to scald.**

## Feeding your baby



Always cool your baby's milk down to the required temperature, as at 70°C the milk is still hot enough to scald. To cool it, hold the bottle, with the cap covering the teat, under cold running water.

Test the temperature of the feed by dropping a little onto the inside of your wrist. It should feel just warm to the touch, not hot.

When feeding your baby keep the teat full of milk, otherwise your baby will take in air.

Never leave your baby alone with a bottle.

**Throw away milk that has not been used within two hours.**

## Feeding away from home

If you need to feed your baby away from home, it is safest to carry a measured amount of milk powder in a small clean and dry container, a flask of hot water that has been boiled and an empty sterilised feeding bottle. Make up a fresh feed whenever you need it. The water must still be hot when you use it, otherwise any bacteria in the milk powder may not be destroyed.

Remember to cool the bottle under cold running water before you use it.

Alternatively, you could use ready-to-drink infant formula milk when you are away from home.

If it is not possible to follow the advice above, or if you need to transport a feed – for example to a nursery or childminder – you should prepare the feed at home and cool it in the back of the fridge. Take it out of the fridge just before you leave and carry it in a cool bag with an ice pack. Use it within four hours, or if you reach your destination within four hours, take it out of the cool bag and store it at the back of the fridge. Feeds should never be stored for longer than 24 hours although this length of time is no longer considered ideal, especially for young babies. It is always safer to make up a fresh feed whenever possible.



Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby. If you decide not to breastfeed or to stop breastfeeding, it is possible to restart but it might be difficult. Giving formula milk to a breastfed baby will reduce your breastmilk supply.

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first six months of a baby's life, as it provides all the nutrients a baby needs.

If you are unable to, or choose not to breastfeed, follow these recommendations and make sure you get advice from your health visitor or doctor.

When introducing your baby to solid foods, it is important to carry on breastfeeding (and/or bottle feeding) beyond the first six months.

You do not need to eat any special foods while breastfeeding. It is a good idea for you to eat a healthy, balanced diet – just like everyone else. Breastfeeding women are advised to take a supplement of 10 micrograms of vitamin D every day.

For information and advice about feeding your baby, please speak to your midwife, health visitor or doctor.

**The information in this leaflet was prepared in consultation with the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative.**

With thanks to the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland.

© Crown copyright 2007

First published February 2004, revised November 2007

Produced by COI for the Department of Health 278959 2p 1000k Jan 08 (HOW)

Printed in Great Britain on chlorine-free paper

The text of this document may be reproduced without formal permission or charge for personal or in-house use.

If you require further copies of this title quote *278959/Bottle feeding* and contact: DH Publications Orderline, tel 08701 555 455 or email [dh@prolog.uk.com](mailto:dh@prolog.uk.com)

[www.dh.gov.uk/publications](http://www.dh.gov.uk/publications)