

Finding a bottles, nipples and formula for your baby may be a challenge. What works for a friend's baby might not work for yours, which is why word of mouth isn't always helpful. It seems like there's a different bottle for every baby.

Feeding Your Baby

NEWS FLASH -- There's no need to warm up cool bottles for formula. Most babies will take the formula straight from the refrigerator. It's a lot quicker and easier than trying to warm up a bottle of formula when your baby is screaming.



Some parents heat up their baby's formula in a microwave oven. There are potential dangers to this method. If heated in a baby bottle, the formula may cause the bottle to break or leak since foods heated in a microwave continue to get hotter for a short while after they are taken out of the oven. The break or crack may not appear until after the bottle has been removed. Another problem is that the formula may become overheated after the removal from the microwave. Test the formula immediately before feeding to be sure you won't burn your baby.

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When feeding your baby, always hold the bottle-never prop it. Your baby shouldn't lie down and feed. He should always be semi-upright or sitting up. Bottle propping cause's four problems-increased ear infections, increased cavities, feeding longer than necessary, and decreased emotional and physical satisfaction from being held.

The nipple hole should be large enough that the formula drips out at a steady pace of two drops per

BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

After your baby turns a year old and is weaned from formula, whole cow's milk--usually fed by bottle--will likely be a diet staple, possibly with breast milk (although you may decide to transition your baby to a sippy cup at that point).

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second. A flow that's too slow may increase the amount of air your baby swallows. If the flow is too fast, he may choke.

Breastfeeding

More and more mothers are deciding to breastfeed their new babies. In deciding if you will breastfeed, you will consider many facts, but perhaps the most important one is that breastfeeding gives your baby the best nutrition possible. The more we learn about breast milk and its composition, the more we realize it is the perfect food for babies. Besides the nutritional benefits, a special closeness often develops between breastfeeding mothers and their babies.

Nutritional Benefits

One of the most convincing arguments for breastfeeding is that human breast milk was designed for human babies, just as cows milk was designed for calves. Commercially made formulas are attempts at duplicating human breast milk. Formulas are getting closer to breast milk in composition and in the proportion of various fats, proteins, carbohydrates, salts, minerals, and other constituents, but commercial formulas will never be able to duplicate it exactly.

As we learn about nutrients in breast milk, it becomes more obvious that breast milk provides just about everything a baby needs for good growth and development. All the nutrients are in the perfect balance for optimal absorption and utilization. Earlier research suggested that breast milk is nutritionally inadequate for infants; it now appears that what was inadequate in that research was the study techniques and the information on which it was based. For example, the amount of iron in breast milk was once thought to be inadequate for growing infants. Doctors were concerned about breastfed babies becoming anemic [not having enough iron in the blood]. Further studies revealed that the iron in breast milk is so well absorbed by infants that the small amount present is sufficient to prevent anemia.

Perhaps the only important substance lacking in breast milk is fluoride. No matter how much fluoride a nursing mother takes in, little or none gets into her breast milk. Many doctors feel that this is the only type of supplemental nutrient a breastfed baby needs.

Immunologic Benefits

Every time you have an illness or receive an immunization, your body develops immunity against that illness. This means that some special cells become sensitized to a particular type of virus or bacterium. The next time that particular organism invades your body; you are prepared to fight it off. If the immunity is strong enough, you may never come down with that illness again. That's the principle behind immunizations for such diseases as mumps, measles, and pertussis [whooping cough]. A vaccine contains inactivated bacteria or virus. Your body is fooled into thinking an infection is present. It develops an immunity against the inactivated virus or bacteria, which also works against the active form.

When you breastfed your new baby, much of the immunity you have developed is passed on to him through the antibodies present in your breast milk. Many studies have shown that breastfed babies have fewer illnesses, milder illnesses, and fewer

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hospitalizations. This increased healthiness is thought to be due to the protection against illnesses that is passed through the breast milk.

Breastfeeding is no guarantee that your infant will never get sick, but it surely lowers the chances. Many mothers note that once they stop breastfeeding, their infants seem to come down with more colds, runny noses, and so on. This may be due to the loss of protection that the baby received from breast milk.

Health Benefits for You

Some of the weight you put on during your pregnancy was a special type of high energy fat called brown fat. With breastfeeding, this extra fat tends to disappear on its own. During the first few months it will almost "melt" away.

Closeness

Many mothers feel certain closeness they have with babies they breastfeed. It comes from more than just holding and feeding the baby. Many of these women have older children whom they bottle-fed. Although they held and fed them just as much, that special feeling wasn't

there. It's the fact of really being the source of nutrition for their growing infants that seems to be important. Unfortunately, the father may feel left out when the mother breastfeeds because he doesn't have an opportunity to feed their new baby. This problem can be offset in a number of ways. One is for the father to occasionally bottle-feed the baby. Another is for him to hold the baby at other times.

Economic Factors and Convenience

Breastfeeding is much less expensive than bottle-feeding-fewer bottles to sterilize, no formula to prepare, no midnight trips to the kitchen to warm up the baby's meal. You will need a breast-pump and other equipment.