

RESPONSIVE BOTTLE FEEDING

The early days with your baby are a great time to get to know and love each other by keeping them close, enjoying skin contact and feeding according to these tips.

Babies will feel more secure if most feeds are given by the parents/primary caregivers, especially in the early weeks and months. This will also help you to bond.

1

Feed your baby when they show signs of being hungry. Cues can include your baby moving their head, opening their mouth and sucking on their fingers. Crying is the last sign of wanting to feed, so try and feed your baby before they cry. For information on preparing infant formula and sterilising bottles visit: [unicef.uk/bfguide](https://www.unicef.uk/bfguide)

2

Hold your baby close in a semi-upright position so you can see their face and look into their eyes. Talk to your baby during feeds to help reassure them. It can be useful to alternate the side you hold your baby during feeds.

3

Invite your baby to open their mouth by gently rubbing the teat against their upper lip. When offering the teat, allow your baby to draw it further back into their mouth. Hold the bottle in a horizontal position (slightly tipped) to prevent milk from flowing too fast.

4

Watch your baby and follow the cues for when they need a break. Signs will differ from one baby to the next. For example, they may splay their fingers and toes, spill milk out of their mouth, stop sucking, turn their head or push the bottle away. Gently remove the teat or bring the bottle downwards to cut off the flow of milk.

5

Your baby will know how much milk they need at each feed. Forcing your baby to finish a feed can be a stressful experience and can mean your baby takes more than they need.



WHAT INFANT FORMULA TO CHOOSE

If you are giving your baby infant formula, **FIRST INFANT FORMULA** is the only formula they will need in the first year of life.

6

What infant formula should I use?

It doesn't matter which brand you use as they are all very similar. It doesn't matter if you choose cows' or goats' milk-based formula, but talk to your midwife/health visitor before choosing soya-based.

7

What about infant formula milks that claim to help with hunger, colic, constipation, reflux, lactose intolerance or allergies?

Some of these infant formula milks are not evidence based and might not be safe for your baby. Ask your midwife or health visitor if you think your baby might need a different infant formula.

8

Should I move on to follow-on formula when my baby is six months old?

There is no need for follow-on formula. Stick to a first infant formula throughout the first year.

9

How long do I need to use infant formula for?

When your baby is one year old, they will be getting more of their energy, vitamins and minerals from food, and full-fat and semi-skimmed cows' milk can be their main milk drink. Ask your health visitor if you have concerns or want to know about other milks.

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Want to know more?

Learn more about responsive bottle feeding and infant formula at firststepsnutrition.org and babyfriendly.org.uk

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby. If you decide not to breastfeed or to stop breastfeeding, it is possible to restart. Giving infant formula to a breastfed baby will reduce your milk supply. You do not need to eat any special foods while breastfeeding, but it is a good idea for you, just like everyone else, to eat a healthy diet.

