

# Formula Feeding

Infant formulas are a fair substitute for breast milk. They will provide reasonable nutrition for the baby in the absence of breast milk. Formulas do not provide the immune protection that breast milk does. If a mother is unable to breastfeed, we recommend a standard infant formula that is based on cow's milk. In the first month of life, we recommend a hypoallergenic formula such as Alimentum or Nutramigen, in the ready to feed form. If this is well tolerated, you can switch your baby to the regular formula at 1-2 months of age.

## Choosing a Formula

-  Any of the commercially available cow's milk based formulas will work for most infants. Most formula companies want parents to believe that they need to keep the baby on the same brand formula. That is usually not the case. There are some babies who will digest one brand better than another, but the vast majority of babies can switch from one cow's milk based formula to another without problem.

## How Much Formula Should a Baby Drink?

-  A newborn's stomach is the size of a small marble. In the first few days of life, most infants will only drink about 1-2 ounces of formula. In a short time, however, they are usually drinking 3-4 ounces every 3-4 hours. As the baby grows, his/her appetite improves and a one month old will usually drink 4 ounces easily.
-  By two months of age, some babies will drink much more formula than others. Most will drink about 4-5 ounces every 4 hours. At four months, the baby will usually be drinking 6 ounces per feeding. Some babies stay at 6 ounce feedings while others go to 8 ounces.
-  The rule of thumb is that a baby should have a minimum of 2 ounces per pound (i.e. a 12 pound baby should have 24 ounces of formula over a twenty four hour period. After six months of age, the baby doesn't need quite as many calories per pound, and even though the baby is getting "bigger", his/her formula intake stays about the same.
-  Between 6-12 months, infants should have at least 16 ounces of formula, but not more than 32 ounces a day. Formula is very high calorie. If a baby drinks too much of it, he/she can develop too many fat cells and become overweight. The 32 ounce limit includes formula used in cereal.

## Refrigerate Formula or leave it out of a refrigerator?

-  If the baby starts a bottle and doesn't finish it, put it back in the refrigerator. You don't have to throw it out. It's good for two hours. In the newborn nursery they throw out partially used bottles because they are working with so many babies. If a bottle has been out of the refrigerator or thermos pack for more than two hours, you can throw away the unused formula. Expressed breast milk can be left out of a refrigerator for a much longer period (up to 5 hours).

## Reasons a Baby Might Need to Use a Low Allergy Formula

-  **Eczema**  
Babies will be switched to a low allergy formula if they are developing eczema. About 40% of infant eczema is related to food allergens, and a switch to a non-cow's milk based formula may help some babies.
-  **Blood tinged stools**  
This can be a symptom of food allergy in young infants. A single blood tinged stool can be an incidental occurrence in any infant, but if it occurs more than once or twice, think food allergy.