

Top tips

1. When buying equipment, don't over complicate it. Buy simple bottles to clean and sterilise. There is no evidence that one brand is better than another.
2. Wash all feeding equipment in hot soapy water, with a designated and exclusive brush, and then sterilise before use.
3. Make sure you buy enough bottles and teats for at least a 12 hour period so that you aren't constantly washing and sterilising bottles - your baby will need your attention a lot of the time. We recommend at least 8.
4. If using formula, choose the cheapest brand. All formula must contain the regulated ingredients, and though some brands add additional ingredients, these are added for marketing purposes and there is research to suggest the extras are not absorbed by babies' bodies in these quantities.
5. Although the cheapest brands are just as good as the most expensive, we wouldn't recommend changing brands according to daily/weekly price variations because babies' tummies are sensitive to subtle changes. If your baby has additional dietary needs or allergies, seek medical advice.
6. Always follow the instructions on the packet. Formula powder is not sterile (contains bacteria) and therefore must always be made with boiling water. Boiling the water and allowing it to cool first is potentially dangerous.*
7. When feeding your baby, hold them close to your body (skin to skin is great when you can) and use the time to really connect and bond with them.
8. Mimicking the natural way babies are fed will support their development more effectively and help them understand their hunger and fullness cues later. Learn how to do this at <https://www.mamanatural.com/paced-bottle-feeding/>

9. Always feed on demand, rather than to schedule, and allow babies to stop feeding as soon as they're ready. Respecting hunger and satiation cues is important for development and for a positive relationship with food later in life.

10. Babies are born with a strong sucking reflex to help establish breastfeeding. If bottle feeding, your baby may need a dummy in between feeds to stay calm. Evidence shows that dummies reduce the risk of SIDS in formula fed babies.

*Please note that the Perfect Prep machines are not recommended because they only use a small amount of hot water and then add cold water to ensure the milk is drinkable straight away. This has been shown in independent testing to not kill the bacteria in the formula powder.

What do I actually need?

At least 8 **bottles with teats** - check what flow these have and choose the slowest, usually recommended for newborns. It is normal for babies to have to suck a lot to get their milk and is good for jaw development and skull alignment.

Sterilising equipment - there are a number of options for sterilising (see below).

A **bottle brush** that you use to clean your bottles and nothing else. Choose one that will get right into any nooks and crannies.

Expressing and milk storage equipment if you're wanting to express your own milk to feed to your baby. There is a separate handout for this.

Sterilising methods

Electric steam steriliser - a machine that plugs into a socket. You put all your bottles and any expressing equipment (apart from electrical bits) in and add water. These usually hold 5 bottles and take from 5 to 15 minutes. Bottles are sterile for 24 hours if the lid is kept shut.

Microwave steam steriliser - a container that you add your equipment to, add water, and then put in the microwave for 4-8 minutes. Usually holds up to 4 bottles.

Sterilising solution method - a tub containing a solution of chemicals and cold water are used. This has the advantage of no requirement for power. It can also hold more equipment if the tub is large. Any equipment that remains in the liquid is sterile for 24 hours.

What milk can I use?

When bottle feeding you can use:

Breastmilk - either by expressing your own milk or from a breast milk donor.

Formula milk - there are many to choose from and it can be confusing. Unless you need a specialist formula milk for additional dietary needs, we recommend using the cheapest or your preferred (as they are essentially all the same) first milk. Follow on milks are a marketing tool and there is never any reason to make the change to them - see below.

Cow's milk - After 12 months, babies can have full-fat cow's milk instead of formula milk. Again there is no need, nor benefit, to using follow-on milks. Cow's milk is not recommended before 12 months as the main source of milk, but is fine in cereals and cooking.