

The effects of giving formula milk to a breastfed baby – A guide for parents

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Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
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Healthy, full term babies only need their mother's breastmilk

Breast-milk contains all the food and water a healthy baby needs until they are six months old. In the first few days, your breasts produce colostrum, the valuable first milk. Healthy, full-term babies do not need "top-up" feeds of formula milk, as your colostrum is perfect for your baby's needs, even in small amounts.

Feeding patterns

Babies feeding patterns vary enormously. Some may not want many feeds in the first 24 hours; however, the feeds may become very frequent, particularly in the first few weeks. This is quite normal and helps reduce the chances of jaundice developing.

Breastfeeding and Expressing milk

Some parents worry that they have not got enough breast milk to feed their baby.

Correct positioning and attachment is very important and will ensure you make enough milk and are less likely to get sore nipples.

Some babies are sleepy after delivery or have mucous in their stomachs, causing them to gag or wretch while feeding. These babies can take many hours to begin breastfeeding. Don't worry, we will observe your baby closely to make sure he/she is well and encourage you to keep your baby close to you in skin-to-skin contact, waking him/her frequently to give your baby lots of opportunities to learn how to breastfeed.

The staff on the ward will encourage and show you how to hand express your breast milk frequently to stimulate your supply. This can be given to your baby in a syringe or feeding cup.

Supply and demand

If you breast feed your baby whenever he/she seems hungry, you will make plenty of milk for your baby's needs. This is because each time you breastfeed, your breasts make more milk. This is called supply and demand.

More feeding = More signals = More milk

Supplementary formula feeds

Some mothers feel very tired and worried while establishing breastfeeding and request a formula "top-up" feed or a dummy / soother.

These are not recommended for the following reasons:

- Formula feeds overfill your baby's tummy and reduce their interest in breastfeeding
- Formula feeds can reduce your milk supply, as the breast is not stimulated
- Sucking on a dummy can teach the baby to suck in a different and unhelpful way and also reduce your milk supply
- Formula feeds increase the chance of your breasts becoming engorged or overfull. This can make breastfeeding more difficult and uncomfortable
- Just one formula feed has been shown to alter the normal healthy bacteria (flora) in the bowel and so increases the risks of infections, asthma and allergies
- Giving a formula feed may reduce your confidence in breastfeeding

Informed decisions

This information is intended to support you in learning to breastfeed. If, after reading this information, you would like your baby to receive a formula top-up feed, it is important that you have the opportunity to make an informed decision regarding all the factors associated with formula milk.

We suggest that only a **small volume** of formula is given using a feeding cup, and **not** in a bottle.

Giving a breastfeeding baby a large volume of formula will potentially:

- Overstretch his / her stomach
- Decrease your baby's eagerness to feed later
- Cause your baby to vomit
- Further unsettle him / her when breastfeeding
- Trigger an allergic sensitisation in your baby
- Have a negative impact on your milk supply, and your confidence in your body's ability to nourish your baby

Tips for coping with an unsettled baby

- Undress your baby and enjoy skin-to-skin contact
- Cuddle your baby close, gently rocking, talking or singing to him / her
- Hand express some of your milk to give to your baby
- Get your partner, other care giver or grandparents to help you

Keep your baby close

We do not routinely separate mothers and babies as you need to recognise the signs your baby gives you that tell you he/she is ready to feed. You also need time to learn how to breastfeed and care for your baby.

The Infant Feeding Team

If you have any queries or concerns regarding feeding your baby or hand expressing colostrum, please contact the **Infant Feeding Team on 0151 290 4166 or email us InfantFeedingTeam@sthk.nhs.uk**

Please be aware that our phone line and email address are not accessible to us outside of normal working hours so if your query is urgent, please contact Ward 2E or the maternity bleep-holder via switchboard (24 Hours).

Alternatively, you can attend **our Infant Feeding Drop In Clinic, where we will be happy to help you.**

The clinic is available:

Every Friday between 10.00 am - 12.00 midday (except bank holidays)

The clinic is held at:

**Whiston Hospital
Parent Education Room
Level 2
(just past maternity scan department)**

Light refreshments will be available

*****If our Infant Feeding Drop In Clinic is not operational for whatever reason the Infant Feeding Team will arrange an appointment for you to come and see us at your convenience*****