



Making an informed choice about: **FEEDING YOUR BABY**



How you feed your baby is one of the most important decisions you make as a parent.

As you decide:

- ◆ Know the facts
- ◆ Talk about your concerns
- ◆ Get your questions answered
- ◆ You should feel good about your choice. It should feel right for you and your family.

Your decision about infant feeding may be influenced by many different life events or circumstances. Whatever you decide, your health care providers will give you the information and support you need.

HUMAN MILK FEEDING

The World Health Organization, Health Canada, Dietitians of Canada, and the Canadian Pediatric Society recommend breastfeeding for babies and children exclusively for the first six months, and sustained for up to two years or longer with appropriate complimentary solid foods. These experts encourage breastfeeding for several reasons:

- Breast and chest feeding provides food, protection, and comfort to your baby.
- Human milk is a living fluid that changes at every feeding as your baby grows. Human milk meets all your baby's nutritional needs for first 6 months of life.
- Breast and chest feeding teaches your baby to eat when hungry and stop when satisfied.
- Human milk is free, and always available to feed your baby. No preparation is needed.

Breast and chest feeding protects your baby from: Ear infections, chest infections, bladder infections, upset stomach, diarrhea, and vomiting. **The longer you breast and chest feed, the more you protect your baby's health – now and later in life.** Breast and chest feeding helps establish a healthy "microbiome" in your baby's gut (like a protective coating of baby's intestines). This helps your baby fight harmful bacteria and viruses. Human milk contains 200+ active live components that feed the good bacteria in your baby's gut to keep it healthy. **There is no other nutrition that can meet the unique needs of your baby as they grow.**

INFANT FORMULA

Infant formula is a human milk substitute, and any non-human form of infant nutrition carries some risk. It is important that all families, who are thinking about giving their baby formula, have the following information to make an informed decision.

Effect on Health

- Giving formula to a breast or chest fed baby can reduce a lactating parent's milk supply and impact their plan to breastfeed
- **Babies who are not breast or chest fed have a higher risk of:**
 - Ear infections
 - Lung and breathing issues
 - Diarrhea
 - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
 - Later in life there are increased health risks including chronic diseases like diabetes and obesity
- Mothers/lactating parents who do not breastfeed have a higher risk of health issues like postpartum bleeding, type 2 diabetes, breast cancer and ovarian cancer.

Cost

The following table shows the average cost of feeding a baby with basic formula for one year. This does not include the cost of feeding equipment.

Type of formula	Cost per year
Ready To Feed	\$3,800 per year
Liquid Concentrate	\$1,400 per year
Powder	\$1,100 per year

This is an approximate cost of formula from birth to one year. The cost will be different with time and will depend on where you live. Numbers are based on estimates in four parts of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2017.

Quality

Sometimes things can go wrong while formula is being made in the factory. For example, it may come in contact with bacteria, or it may have missing or wrong ingredients. The Healthy Canadians website lists safety concerns and recall alerts. Compare the lot numbers on formula cans to the lot numbers on this website. To view this website and sign up for alerts, go to: <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/index-eng.php>.

Supply

In recent years, there have been shortages in formula supply due to supply chain issues. This led to concerned parents buying more formula than needed, leaving others without.

IS A CHOICE FOR INFANT FORMULA AFASS?

Acceptable: is this an acceptable method to you? Do you foresee any problems?

Feasible: Do you have adequate time, knowledge, skills, resources, and support to correctly mix and feed formula?

Affordable: Can you afford the cost of formula without harming health or nutrition status of your family

Sustainable: Do you have availability of a continuous supply of ingredients required for formula feeding for 9-12 months

Safe: Do you have resources to prepare and store correctly, has well water been tested for contaminants?

SUPPLEMENTING WITH CARE

If you breast or chest feed and your baby requires a supplement, the best option is human milk. This can be expressed by hand and/or by pump. Know that:

- Giving formula to a breast or chest fed baby can decrease your milk supply.
- Supplementing with formula may lead to ending breast or chest feeding before you had planned to stop.
- It can be hard to restart breast or chest feeding after having stopped.

Take care to offer needed supplements in the following order as available:

1. Your own fresh milk, hand expressed and/or pumped.
2. Your own milk that has been frozen and thawed just before using.
3. Pasteurized donor human milk (expressed milk) from a human milk bank. Some milk banks may only have enough milk for babies with special needs such as preterm babies.
4. Commercial formula that is cow milk based.

If you are thinking about using formula, or need to give formula, consider:

- Getting knowledgeable help to maintain your own milk supply and improve breast and chest feeding.
- Human milk feeding AND using formula as a supplement only when needed.
- Feeding expressed human milk and formula.



If you choose to give your baby infant formula, please refer to the handbook, "Infant formula: What you need to know"

REGARDLESS OF FEEDING CHOICE..



SKIN TO SKIN

Every baby will benefit from early skin to skin contact, and it is the best way to bond with baby after birth. There are several other benefits discussed in this Skin to Skin pamphlet:

PRENATAL COLOSTRUM COLLECTION

Whether you choose to breast or chest feed or not, your body will start making colostrum around mid-pregnancy. In most pregnancies, it is safe to start expression and storage of colostrum at 36 weeks to give your baby after birth for its immunity benefits, but it can also help prepare your body for labour. To learn more, check out the More Milk Sooner website:

