



Heathly Hints from Earth's Best: Formula Facts



* All infant formula must meet strict US Food and Drug Administration Guidelines to ensure it is nutritionally complete and that it meets the highest safety standards.

* There are multiple types of formulas to choose from so you must speak to your pediatrician and do a little research to determine which formula is best for your baby. The main decisions to be made are: 1. The type of protein used, which can be milk, soy, or elemental. In general, unless your baby is allergic to cow's milk protein, a milk-based formula is the best choice. 2. The type of sugar used. Some formulas, including all soy-based formulas are lactose free, meaning they do not have milk sugar. Most babies have no problem digesting the sugar found naturally in milk. 3. Iron fortified or not. Unless there are specific medical reasons not to, your baby should have an iron-fortified formula. 4. DHA and ARA enriched or not. These are fatty acids that are found in breast milk, but are not required to be in formula. 5. Organic or non-organic. Organic formula is blended without the use of growth hormones, steroids, antibiotics, dangerous pesticides or chemical fertilizers.

* **When** do you give your baby his formula? It's best to not put a newborn baby on a feeding schedule. Normal, healthy infants are able to self-regulate their eating behavior. A baby 'knows' when he's hungry and needs to eat and when he's full and wants to stop. So if you can respond to his hunger (crying or fussiness) and satiety cues (stops sucking or turns away from the bottle) then you will be helping him to learn to eat according to internal needs and not external pressures.

* **How often** should you feed your baby? Let your baby decide. Smaller, younger babies, on average, will need to eat every two to three hours. As they grow bigger, they can hold more formula in their tummies, so can go longer in between feedings. Listen and pay attention for signs that your baby is ready to eat. Some babies are naturally more aggressive eaters and will let you know when they're ready to eat. Other babies will have more subtle cues, and require a little bit more attention to determine their eating readiness. Your ability to read and respond to your baby's communications in regards to feeding may impact his later weight and nutrition.

* **How much?** Your baby will 'tell' you when he's full and has had enough. Younger babies will eat smaller amounts both at one time, and in total for the day. Our [feeding schedule](#) will help you to determine if your baby is getting about the right amount for his age and stage.

* Your baby's growth and development are one of the best measures of adequate nutrition. Keep in close contact with your baby's pediatrician to chart growth and development.

* Never use whole cow's milk instead of infant formula. It is nutritionally inferior and can negatively affect your child's growth and development. However, by the age of one, if your baby is well on his way to a diet of solid foods, then whole cow's milk can be used to wean from formula.

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