



CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE

Newborn feeding: Formula preparation

This document should be read in conjunction with this [Disclaimer](#)

Aim

To ensure the safe preparation of infant formula.

Key points

1. Breastfeeding has many health benefits for both infant and mother. WNHS staff have a responsibility to promote breastfeeding first and if infant formula is required, to educate and support parents about formula feeding.
2. Infant formula requires accurate reconstitution and hygienic preparation to ensure its safety, so it is important that WNHS staff know how to demonstrate the preparation of infant formula on an individual basis and how to feed an infant with a bottle.
3. Cow's milk-based formula is suitable for the first 12 months of life unless the infant is unable to tolerate cow's milk-based products for specific medical, cultural or religious reasons, in which case special formulas may be used under medical supervision
4. In the hospital setting preparation of formula should be demonstrated on an individual basis in a private area away from other mothers.
5. The National Health and Medical Research Council recommend that **all** equipment used both in the preparation and feeding of infant formula is sterilised prior to its use, furthermore they suggest that boiling is the preferred method to do this. Boiling gives consistent and reliable results at home if the following steps are followed:
 - Wash bottles, teats and lids in hot soapy water with a bottle/ teat brush before sterilisation
 - Place utensils, including bottles, teats and lids in a large saucepan
 - Cover utensils with water, making sure to eliminate all air bubbles from the bottle
 - Bring water to the boil and boil for 5 minutes. Turn off – do not allow it to boil dry
 - Allow the equipment to cool in the saucepan until it is hand hot and then remove it.
6. If using a commercial home steriliser (e.g. Electric, microwave steam steriliser or chemical steriliser) follow the manufacturer's instructions.

- Store equipment that is not being used straight away in a clean container in the fridge.
7. The mother should be informed that she has to provide her own formula and follow the instructions on the back of the can to ensure the correct amount of water and powder-this may vary between different formulas. Guide to check the expiry date on the can of formula and discard if out of date. Discard any opened can of formula after one month.
 8. Just before feeding formula should be prepared in the available sterilised single use bottles.
 9. Ensure the mother always washes her hands before preparing formula and ensure that formula is prepared in a clean area
 10. Boil fresh water and allow it to cool until lukewarm- at least 30 minutes.
 11. Firstly pour the correct amount of previously boiled (now cooled) water into a sterilised bottle and then add powder.
 12. Always measure the amount of powder using the scoop provided in the can, as scoop sizes vary between different formulas
 13. Fill the measuring scoop with formula powder and level off using the levelling device provided or the back of a sterilised knife –the scoop should be lightly tapped to remove any air bubbles.
 14. Take care to instruct the mother to add the correct number of scoops to the water in the bottle – do not add half scoops or more scoops than stated in the instructions
 15. Place the teat and cap on the bottle and shake it until the powder dissolves
 16. Test the temperature of the milk with a few drops on the inside of the mother's wrist – it should feel just warm, but cool is better than too hot
 17. Formula feeding should be a comfortable, relaxing and an enjoyable experience for the mother and infant. It is a time for closeness and cuddling and responding to infant cues
 18. Guide the mother to hold the baby in a semi-upright position
 19. Feed the infant
 - Any formula left at the end of the feed must be discarded
 - Any formula that has been at room temperature for longer than 1 hour should be discarded
 20. The mother should be given both verbal and written instructions on how to safely make up formula, and be able to demonstrate safe preparation. See KEMH Pamphlet: Formula Feed.
 - Information on equipment required, cleaning and sterilising bottles and equipment, preparing formula and storing formula can be found in the pamphlet: Formula Feed.

References

1. Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers, Section 8. National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 2012.
2. Eat for health [Infant Feeding Guidelines Information for Health Workers](#) (National Health and Medical Research Council 2012, Department of Health and Ageing)

Related WNHS policies, procedures and guidelines

KEMH Clinical Guidelines, O&G, Newborn Feeding:

- Feeding technique
- Fluid requirements of the formula fed baby
- Fluid requirements of the LBW, Preterm and Small for Gestational Age Baby

Useful resources (including related forms)

KEMH Patient Brochure: Formula Feed

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