

# Key information for formula feeding mothers

**BHSCT Maternity Services**



**Before you are discharged from the Maternity Unit you should receive take home hard copy resources (see over) which include this information.**

The Belfast Trust Maternity Services are 'UNICEF Baby Friendly Accredited'. We believe that breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby as it provides important short and long term health benefits for you and your baby.

Our staff support the right of all mothers to make an informed choice about infant feeding and will help you whatever your chosen feeding method.

If you have chosen to formula/ bottle feed the main information will be in the green **Birth to five book** and the **Bottlefeeding Leaflet** produced by the NI Public Health Agency.

**Please ensure you have a copy before discharge.**



Before going home a midwife or maternity support worker will discuss the following:

- Sterilising and the safe preparation of feeds  
(The use of formula preparation machines is not recommended as there is not enough evidence on their safety)
- Importance of the 1<sup>st</sup> milk for the first year
- Responsive feeding (see over)

Detail about this information can be found in your '**Birth to five book**' (chapter 1 from page 18) and in the PHA **Bottlefeeding leaflet**

Please make sure you have a copy.

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/birth-five>

[http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Bottlefeeding\\_03\\_17.pdf](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Bottlefeeding_03_17.pdf)

# Responsive feeding – bottlefeeding

## WHAT DOES RESPONSIVE FEEDING MEAN FOR A BOTTLEFEEDING MOTHER AND BABY?

**Responsive feeding is about being in-tune with your baby.** **Old advice:** For a long time bottle-feeding parents were encouraged to feed their baby an amount 3-4 hourly. This can lead to overfeeding and has contributed to various problems including obesity.

### SO HOW DO WE RESPONSIVELY FEED A BOTTLE-FED BABY?

Parents should be encouraged to:

- Look out for their baby's feeding cues eg. sucking on fingers, nuzzling
- Hold baby fairly upright and close when feeding and look into their eyes- helps the baby feel loved and secure.
- Gently tease baby with teat before inserting into mouth, bottle should be only slightly tipped to prevent milk flowing too fast.
- Watch baby's behaviour – do they need a break? Let baby pace the feed
- Never force baby to finish feed
- Limit the number of people feeding the baby. Mum and dad should do most of the feeding

#### REMEMBER:

- **'FIRST' INFANT FORMULA** (WHEY-BASED) is the only formula most babies will need and is suitable for the 1<sup>st</sup> year of life. Feeding is a bonding experience
- **Responsive feeding can encourage loving relationships between parents and babies and in doing so produces high levels of OXYTOCIN, low levels of stress hormones which can help promote optimal brain development.**

#### Reference

- PHA Bottlefeeding leaflet
- First Steps Nutrition Trust – Formula Leaflet

**BABIES SHOULD NOT BE LEFT TO CRY FOR LONG PERIODS; THEY CANNOT BE SPOILED. BABIES WILL BE MUCH MORE CALM AND GROW CONFIDENTLY IF THEIR NEEDS FOR LOVE AND COMFORT ARE MET**

# WHAT INFANT FORMULA TO CHOOSE

**If you are giving your baby infant formula, FIRST INFANT FORMULA (whey-based) is the only formula they will need in the first year of life**

1

**What infant formula should I use?**

It doesn't matter which brand you use, they are all very similar. It doesn't matter if you choose cows' or goats' milk based formula, but talk to your midwife or health visitor before choosing a soya based formula.

2

**What about all the other milks that claim to help hungry babies, prevent colic, wind, reflux or allergies?**

There is no evidence that most of these "special" milks do any good, and they might not be safe for your baby. Ask your GP or other health professional if you think your baby might need a different milk.

3

**Should I move on to follow-on formula when my baby is six months old?**

There is no need for follow-on formula. Stick to a first infant formula throughout the first year.

4

**How long do I need to use infant formula for?**

When your baby is one year old, they will be getting more of their energy, vitamins and minerals from food, and full fat cows' milk can be their main milk drink. If you have any concerns, or want to know about other milks, ask your health visitor

5

**Want to know more?**

A simple, up to date guide on infant milks can be downloaded at [firststepsnutrition.org](http://firststepsnutrition.org)

Unicef UK provides a guide on different types of infant milks, available for download at [babyfriendly.org.uk](http://babyfriendly.org.uk)

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby. Giving infant formula to a breastfed baby will reduce your breastmilk supply.

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# RESPONSIVE BOTTLE FEEDING

The early days with your baby is a great time to get to know and love each other. This can be done by keeping your baby close to you, enjoying skin contact and feeding according to these tips. Babies will feel more secure if most feeds are given by mum and dad, especially in the early weeks, as this will really help you bond with each other.

6

Feed your baby when they show signs of being hungry: look out for cues (moving head and mouth around, sucking on fingers). Crying is the last sign of wanting to feed, so try and feed your baby before they cry (for more details, see the Start4Life Guide to bottle feeding).

7

Hold baby close in a semi-upright position so you can see their face and reassure them by looking into their eyes and talking to them during the feed. Begin by inviting baby to open their mouth: gently rub the teat against their top lip.

8

Gently insert the teat into baby's mouth keeping the bottle in a horizontal position (just slightly tipped) to prevent milk from flowing too fast.

9

Follow baby's cues for when they need a break and gently remove the teat or bring the bottle downwards to cut off the flow of milk.

10

Your baby will know how much milk they need. Forcing your baby to finish a feed will be distressing, and can mean your baby is overfed.

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