

GUIDE TO MAKING UP A BOTTLEFEED

For healthcare professionals to give to parents.

Preparing your baby's bottle safely is important, and taking a few easy steps helps make sure every feed is just right for your little one. These instructions are for powdered milks only. Preparation methods for specialist milks may vary. Because powdered milks are not sterile, it is important to follow these instructions to prevent your baby from being ill.



1

Wash and sterilise bottles and teats according to manufacturer's instructions. Wash your hands and wipe clean all surfaces to prevent the spread of germs.



2

Boil 1 litre of freshly run tap water and leave to cool for no longer than 30 minutes. Measure the required amount of water (refer to on-pack feeding guide) into a sterilised bottle. Do not use artificially softened or repeatedly boiled water.



3

For accurate dosage, always use scoop provided and level off powder with built-in leveller (if provided). Alternatively, level with a clean, dry knife. Do not press or heap the powder into the scoop.



4

Add the correct measure of powder to the water (1 scoop to 30ml /1 floz of water). Adding too many or too few scoops can be harmful. Place the sterilised teat and cap on the bottle and **shake immediately, vertically and vigorously for at least 10 seconds, until the powder is dissolved.**



5

Cool the bottle under a running tap. Check temperature of milk by allowing some drops to fall on your wrist. If it feels comfortable (lukewarm, not hot), it should be just right for the baby. Do not heat feeds in a microwave as hot spots can occur and cause scalding.

Use made-up feeds within two hours. Once used, discard any leftover milk, wash bottles and teats, and re-sterilise, ready for next feed.



FORMULA FEEDING AWAY FROM HOME¹



- For safe, on-the-go formula feeding, carry pre-measured powder in a dispenser, a flask of hot water (70°C), and a sterilised bottle. Mix the feed when needed and cool to serving temperature.

- Alternatively, use ready-to-feed liquid formula. Shake well and pour into a sterilised feeding bottle. Serve at room temperature or warm if desired.

- If neither of the above options are possible, make a bottle at home and store it in the fridge. Take it out of the fridge just before you leave and place in a cool bag with an ice pack. You must use the bottle within 4 hours. If you do not have an ice pack, or access to a fridge, the bottle must be used within 2 hours.



OTHER FORMULA PREPARATION METHODS^{1, 3}



Baby formula preparation machines

If you use a baby formula preparation machine, follow the manufacturer's instructions. Make sure the water that comes out of the machine is at least 70°C when it's mixed with the formula powder. You can use a digital food thermometer to check this. Water at 70°C or more will kill any harmful bacteria. If the water is less than 70°C, stop using the machine and follow the step-by-step guide to preparing formula feed instead.



Boiling water taps

If you use a boiling water tap, the formula milk powder should be added quickly to the water and mixed, to prevent the water cooling below 70°C. However the safest way to prepare water for a feed is to use a kettle and follow the step-by-step guide.



Bottled water³

Bottled water is not usually recommended for making up formula feeds for your baby. This is because it's not sterile and may contain too much salt (sodium) or sulphate.

But in rare circumstances, such as when your drinking water supply is unavailable or has been contaminated, you can use bottled water to make up formula feeds. You still need to boil the bottled water and follow the step-by-step guide.



A note on sterilising²

There are several ways you can sterilise your baby's feeding equipment. These include cold water sterilising solution, steam sterilising and boiling. Always follow manufacturer's instructions. UV sterilisers are not recommended as there is not enough research to show that these machines are safe and effective.

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FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL USE WITH PARENTS

Important notice: Breastfeeding is best for babies and provides many benefits. It is important that, in preparation for and during breastfeeding, you eat a varied, balanced diet. Combined breast and bottle feeding in the first weeks of life may reduce the supply of your own breastmilk, and reversing the decision not to breastfeed is difficult. The social and financial implications of using an infant formula should be considered. Improper use of an infant formula or inappropriate foods or feeding methods may present a health hazard. If you use an infant formula, you should follow manufacturer's instructions for use carefully – failure to follow the instructions may make your baby ill. Always consult your doctor, midwife or health visitor for advice about feeding your baby.

References: 1. National Childcare Trust <https://www.nct.org.uk/information/baby-toddler/feeding-your-baby-or-toddler/step-step-guide-making-formula-feed> [Accessed July 2026]. 2. NHS How to make up baby formula. <https://www.nhs.uk/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/bottle-feeding/making-up-baby-formula/> [Accessed July 2026]. 3. NHS: Formula milk: common questions. Available online at: <https://www.nhs.uk/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/bottle-feeding/formula-milk-questions/> [Accessed July 2026]