

Feeding Our Youngest

Newborn to 1 month

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Welcome to one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs in the world — feeding your baby! Babies don't come with instruction manuals, and all parents have questions. Sometimes the answers — from many sources — can be confusing. Feeding patterns for infants have changed dramatically through the years, so the advice you receive about feeding may vary, too. In this series of newsletters, you will learn to:

- Understand your baby's needs.
- Read your baby's cues.
- Watch for new skills as your baby develops.
- Enjoy mealtime with your youngest.

A new baby will lead the way when it comes to sleeping and eating patterns. Your newborn will need to eat often — probably every 2 or 3 hours. His stomach is so small (Figure 1) that he will wake up frequently, ready to eat.

When should you feed your baby?

Watch for his cues — babies will do many things (before they cry) to tell you they are hungry. Look for these signs from your baby to show you he is ready to be fed:

- Keeps his hands near his mouth.
- Bends his arms and legs.
- Makes sucking noises.
- Puckers his lips.
- Searches for the nipple.

It will be more positive for your baby AND you if feeding begins when you see your baby give you one or more cues — don't wait for baby to cry! Also, crying won't always mean "I'm hungry!" Both you and baby will soon get used to reading each other's signals, but it can be hard — especially at first.

Figure 1. Newborn Tummy Size



Breastfeeding or Infant Formula Feeding?

Whichever method you choose, know your baby benefits from the closeness and comfort of feeding time. Always wash your hands before feeding your baby — you are keeping his meals safe.

Building Blocks: Breastfeeding is Your Baby's Best Food:



- Optimal nutrition for baby's growth and development.
- Convenient, ready, and the right temperature.
- Costs less than infant formula.
- Offers health benefits to baby, mom, family, and community.

Breast milk is easily digested so breastfeed whenever your baby seems hungry — sometimes as often as 10 to 12 times per day in the first month. This frequent nursing helps establish your milk supply. You will know your baby is getting enough to eat if he has 6 to 8 wet diapers and 3 stools per day. And remember — your baby is growing rapidly! You may notice that your baby seems hungrier at times and wants to eat more often. Most babies experience a growth spurt between ages 1 and 3 weeks, and another at age 6 to 8 weeks. Though it is a good sign, it can be a challenge to a weary mom. Just feed baby when you see the cues signaling he's getting hungry and know that growth spurts don't last long.

If human milk is unavailable, infants should be fed an iron-fortified commercial infant formula. Infant formulas are carefully designed to meet your baby's nutritional needs. If you decide to supplement breastfeeding with formula or formula-feed entirely, your healthcare provider will probably recommend an iron-fortified formula to prevent

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anemia. Always mix formula according to package directions, for your baby's health. Do not give your baby cow's milk or goat's milk — he is not able to digest them until he is about a year old.

If you feed your baby with a bottle, be sure to hold him so he can see your face as you feed him. Never prop your baby's bottle. Babies can easily gag or choke if the bottle is left in their mouths.

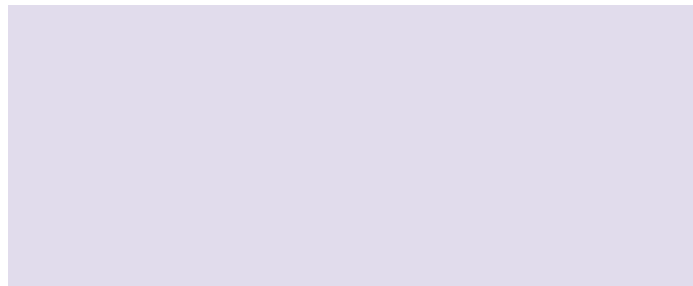
It is fine to give your baby breast milk or formula that is room temperature, or cool. If he prefers a warm bottle, heat the bottle in a pan of hot water or hold the bottle under hot running water. Never use the microwave to heat the bottle — this is very dangerous. The formula may become very hot when microwaved, even though the bottle seems cool. The hot liquid can burn your baby's tender mouth.

It's important to keep your baby's milk safe. Discard any breast milk or formula left in the bottle after a feeding. Bacteria from your baby's mouth can cause spoilage and make your baby sick. Here is more information about keeping breast milk safe:

ksre-learn.com/MF3200

Read more about keeping your baby's formula safe: <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/infant-formula-safety-dos-and-donts>

Remember, only breast milk or formula for your newborn. Your baby is perfectly nourished by breast milk or formula at this age — no need for water or solids yet. We'll talk about the introduction of solid foods later, when your baby is showing signs he is ready — nearer to 6 months of age.



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