

Infant Formula Safe Handling Practices

For Early Childhood Education and Care services

This fact sheet summarises the information from the most up to date national guidelines:

www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/170131_n56_infant_feeding_guidelines.pdf

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-gug-directorscoord

www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/134032/Food_Safety_Manual_for_Tasmanian_Education_and_Care_Services_Combined.pdf

Infant Formula Preparation – make as required

Infant formula should be prepared safely in a clean environment, according to the manufacturer's directions and using the scoop in the tin to measure the powder.

Formula that is not made up correctly can cause an infant to become dehydrated, constipated or even undernourished. It is important that nothing extra is added to infant formula.

Adding infant cereal or other foods to formula can interfere with an infant's feeding.

Parents/carers should provide the early childhood service with sterilised bottles and teats, as well as pre-measured powdered formula, each day.

These should be clearly labelled with the date, the infant's name and the amount of water to be mixed with the formula.

It may be easier for parents/carers to bring bottles already filled with the correct amount of pre-boiled, cooled water so staff and carers don't have to boil and cool water before feeding infants.

Water for infant formula should be prepared by bringing a fresh kettle or jug of water to the boil and allow it to boil until the cut-off point.

In places with a clean water supply that meets Australian standards, hot water urns like hydro-boils are safe to use for formula making as long as the water is boiling hot (i.e. hasn't recently been refilled).

Once the water has boiled, add it to a sterilised bottle and allow the water to cool until it is lukewarm by letting it sit for about 30 minutes.

Always add the water to the sterilised bottle first followed by the powder, which should be measured using the scoop provided or the pre-measured amount sent in by the family. Gently shake the bottle until the formula powder has dissolved.

The prepared formula should be fed to the infant within one hour of preparation.

Ideally, feeds should be prepared one bottle at a time only, and just before feeding.

If feeds need to be prepared in advance, they must be refrigerated below 5°C immediately and used within 24 hours.

Warming Infant Formula – if made in advance and stored in the fridge

To make sure that formula is heated evenly and to reduce the risk of burning the infant, bottles should be warmed in a water bath until the milk is a comfortable body temperature. This should take around 10 minutes (no more than 15 minutes).

After warming, gently roll the bottle to evenly distribute the heat.

Always check the temperature of the milk before giving it to an infant. This can be done by dropping a little milk on the inside of your wrist.

The milk should feel the same temperature as your skin or a bit cooler.

The Infant Feeding Guidelines (2012) recommend **not using a microwave** for heating formula, as this can cause uneven heating and burn an infant's mouth.

A feed should take no longer than one hour. Any formula that has been kept at room temperature for longer than one hour should be thrown away.

Any formula left at the end of the feed must be thrown away and cannot be stored, even in the fridge, for later use.

Unused formula which has been at room temperature for less than one hour (in a sterile container) may be stored, correctly labelled with name, date, and time prepared, in a fridge for up to 24 hours.

Throw away any refrigerated formula that has not been used within 24 hours.

Cleaning bottles for Infants

After use, all bottles and teats should be rinsed in cold water and sent home to be washed and sterilised.

Ideally bottles will be brought to the service cleaned and sterilised; however, when the need arises to clean bottles in the workplace the following procedures can be a guide.

Bottles need to be sterilised, sanitised and disinfected to make sure they do not carry any harmful bacteria.

This can be done with several different methods, including: boiling with an electric sterilising unit, chemical sterilisation or using a microwave steriliser.

Whichever method is chosen, be sure to always follow the instructions carefully.

Boiling is the **preferred method** for sterilising bottles as it provides consistent and reliable results when the steps outlined below are taken:

- Wash bottles, teats, and caps in hot soapy water with a bottle / teat brush before sterilisation.
- Place all utensils, including bottles, teats and caps in a large saucepan on the back burner of the stove.
- Cover all utensils with water, making sure to eliminate all air bubbles from the bottles.
- Bring the water to the boil and boil for five 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 – be very careful if children are present.
- Store all equipment that is not being used straight away in a clean container in the fridge.
- All equipment must be re-sterilised if it isn't used within 24 hours.

Each centre may have varying policies and practices for sterilisation and cleaning of bottles.

More detailed guidelines can be found in the Infant feeding Guidelines 2012, pages 77-78; www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/170131_n56_infant_feeding_guidelines.pdf.

Good bottle feeding practices

Infants should be allowed to decide the amount of milk they wish to drink, and should never be made to finish a bottle.

Always check the temperature of the milk before feeding to an infant by dropping a little milk onto the inside of your wrist – it should feel warm but not hot.

Hold, cuddle and talk to an infant while feeding (if it isn't too distracting).

Never leave an infant to feed on their own (with a bottle propped) – the milk may flow too quickly and this can cause the infant to splutter and choke.

Never put an infant to sleep with a bottle. This increases the risk of ear infections and tooth decay as well as the risk of choking.

National Quality Framework

- Standard: 2.2.1
- Regulations: 77, 78, 79

This document has been prepared by Community Dietitians from Public Health Services, Department of Health.

For further information please contact:

community.nutrition@health.tas.gov.au