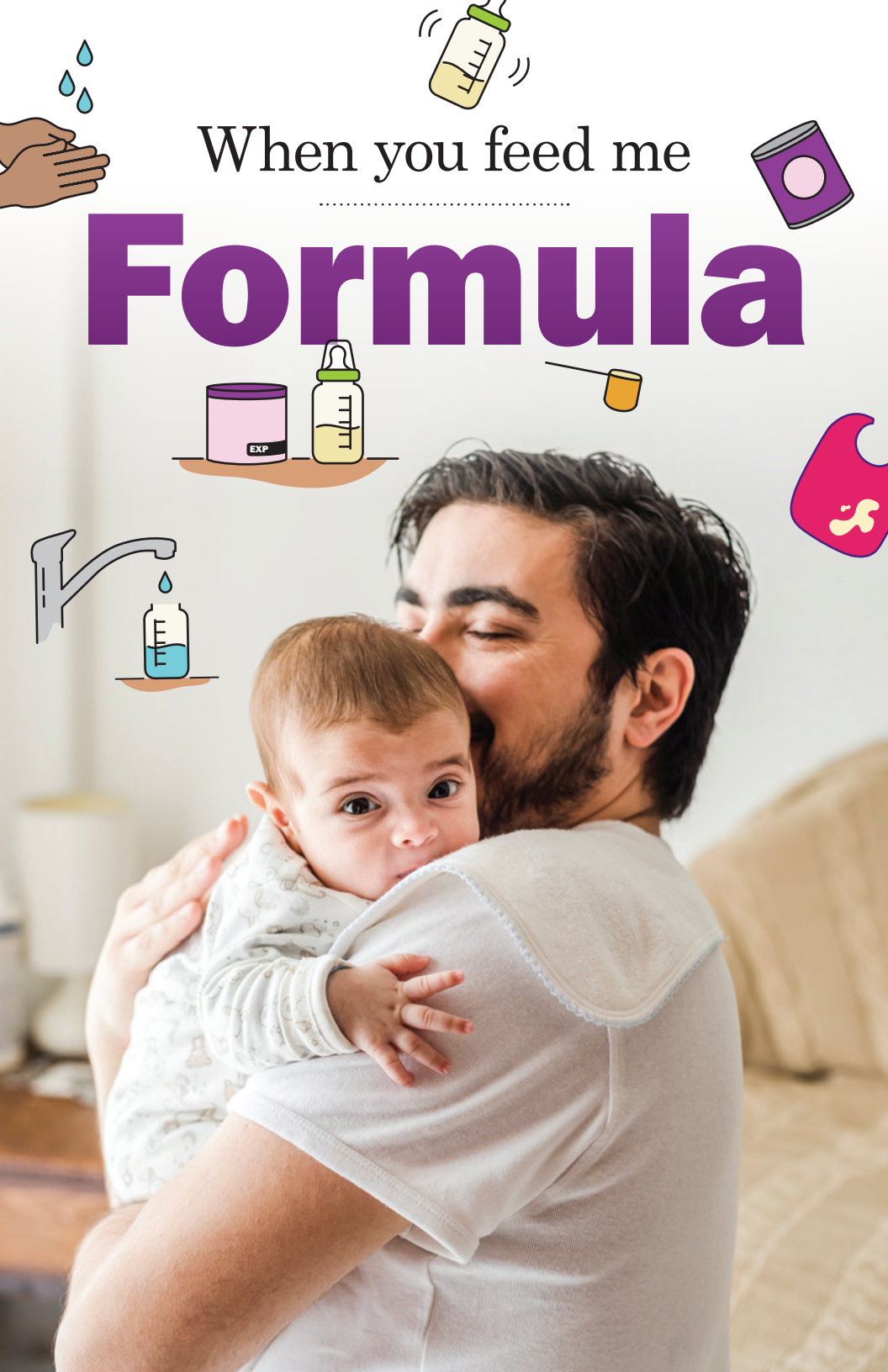
When you feed me

Formula



Feed me when I show you I am hungry

Look for some of these hunger cues and feed me before I start to cry.

I will:

- Keep my hands near my mouth
- Bend my arms and legs toward my body
- Make sucking noises
- Pucker my lips
- Search for the nipple

Stop feeding me when I show you I am full.

I may get full before I finish my bottle.
Look for these fullness cues.

I will:

- Suck slower or stop sucking
- Relax my hands and arms
- Turn away from the nipple
- Push away
- Fall asleep

My stomach is very small, about the size of my fist. I need you to feed me small amounts often.

5 Tips to feeding me

1

Always hold my bottle and me.

2

Hold me almost upright so I can see your face. My head needs to be higher than my chest and not tilted back.

3

Brush the bottle nipple across my upper lip. Wait for me to open my mouth.

4

To feed me, hold my bottle in a level, almost flat position. The nipple will fill with some formula. This position allows me to suck the formula from the bottle at a comfortable pace.

5

Let me pause and take breaks every few sucks. Be patient. I may feed for about 15–20 minutes. Burp me often.

How much formula I will drink

I may drink about every 3 to 4 hours, sometimes more often. I may not always drink the same amount. Watch for my hunger and fullness cues.

Birth to 2 months
up to 2 to 3 ounces

2 to 4 months
3 to 4 ounces

4 to 6 months
4 to 6 ounces

6 to 8 months
6 to 8 ounces

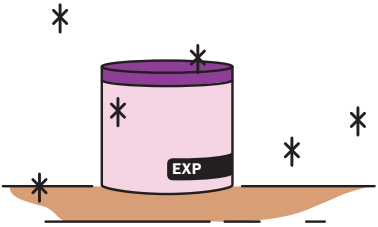
8 to 12 months
4 to 6 ounces (I eat more foods, so I drink less formula)

Prepare and store my formula carefully.

1. **Check the expiration date** and condition of the container. Do not buy formula with a date that has passed. Avoid damaged containers.

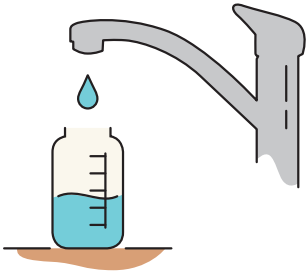
2. **Wash your hands** with soap and water. Dry.

3. **Clean the preparation area.** Wipe the formula container, lid, and opener (if using).



4 **Wash the bottles and bottle parts** with soap and hot water or clean them in a dishwasher using hot water and a heated dry cycle daily.

5 **Use cold or room temperature tap water** from a safe water source to prepare my bottles. Do not use hot tap water because it could contain lead or other harmful minerals from the pipes. If you are concerned about water safety, check with your local health department or health care provider. Ask if you need to use bottled nursery water, boiled then cooled tap water, or sanitized bottles and parts.



Check with your health care provider. You may want to take extra steps to boil the water if your infant:

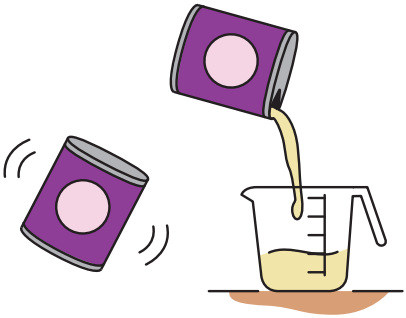
- is less than 3 months old.
- was born prematurely.
- has a weakened immune system.

Using hot water (greater than 158 degrees F) to make your formula helps kill germs that may be in powdered formula. Boil the water and let cool for about 5 minutes. Carefully prepare formula. Cool to body temperature before feeding.

6 Powder formula

- Follow the directions on the label.
- Measure the water and put it in a clean bottle.
- Using a clean, dry scoop from the container, add the correct amount of powder to the bottle with the water. For every 2 ounces of water, add 1 level scoop of powdered formula.
- Attach the cap and nipple. Shake well.

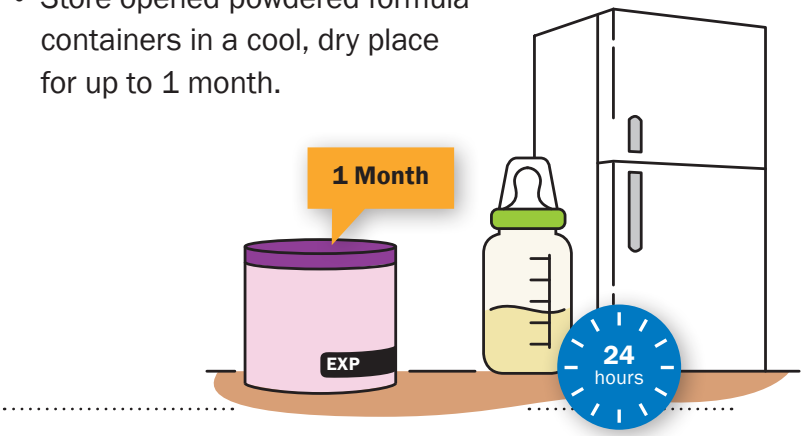
Concentrate formula



- Follow the directions on the label.
- Shake the can to mix, before opening.
- Pour the can of formula into a clean container.
- Fill the can with water and add to the formula in the container.
- Mix.
- Pour desired amount of prepared formula into clean bottles. Attach the cap and nipple.
- Or, to make individual bottles, mix equal amounts of concentrated formula and water in the bottle.

7 Storing formula

- Store prepared formula in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.
- Use prepared formula taken out of the refrigerator within 2 hours.
- Once you start feeding, use the bottle of formula within 1 hour.
- Pour out any formula left in the bottle after feeding me.
- Store opened can of concentrate in the refrigerator for up to 48 hours.
- Store opened powdered formula containers in a cool, dry place for up to 1 month.

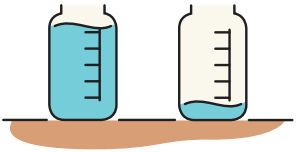


8 For more information on preparing and storing formula, go to Centers for Disease Control:

- Infant Formula Preparation and Storage
- Cleaning Infant Feeding Items
- Cronobactrer Infection and Infants

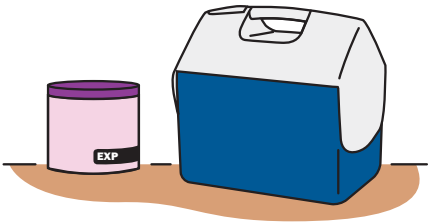
General Tips

Add the right amount of water! Too much or not enough water is dangerous for me. I could get very sick or not grow well.



If you want to warm my bottle, put it in a small bowl of hot water. Test the temperature before feeding to me by shaking a little on your wrist. Do not warm my bottles in the microwave.

Place my prepared formula in an insulated bag or cooler with an ice pack to keep it cold when we are out and about. Use within 24 hours.



Only put formula, water or breastmilk in my bottle. Do not put anything such as cereal, baby foods, honey, or juice in my bottle. I could choke, get tooth decay, and eat too much.

Spitting up is normal.
If I spit up too much, try these tips:

- Feed me smaller amounts more often.
- Hold me more upright.
- Stop and burp me more often.
- Keep me upright for about 20-30 minutes after I eat.
- Check the hole in the nipple on my bottle to be sure it is not too big.
- Keep me calm.
- Check with my health care provider, if you think I am spitting up too much.

Never put me in bed with my bottle. I could choke, spit up, get ear infections, or get tooth decay.

WIC may not provide all the formula your baby needs, especially after your baby is 6 months old. This handout applies to healthy, full-term infants who drink regular formulas, not special or therapeutic formulas. If you think your baby needs a special formula, talk to your health care provider or WIC nutritionist.

California Department of Public Health,
California WIC program

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