

Taking Good Care of **Baby**



The immune system is the body's way of fighting infection. When your baby is born, its immune system is not well developed. Infants can't fight disease as well as adults. In adults, natural stomach acids kill some harmful bacteria. Infants produce less acid in their stomachs. This makes it easier for harmful bacteria to live and make the baby sick.

Breast-feeding is the safest and most nutritious way to feed your baby. You don't have to worry about clean bottles, spoiled formula, or what to do with left-overs. Better yet, breast-milk helps your baby's body fight infection and have fewer allergies. Formula doesn't do these things. That's why breast-milk is extra good for your baby.

Formula

If you choose to bottle-feed and when you start feeding solid food to your baby, you must make sure the formula and baby foods are safe. Some guidelines you should follow are:



Use safe water in mixing your formula for newborns.

Before using water to mix the formula, you should find out if your water is safe for newborns. Most city water is safe to use from the tap. You must boil spring water or well water for 5 minutes before you use it. If you travel and are not sure of the water supply, take bottles of water with you. However, some doctors recommend that you boil all water for baby formula. Follow your doctor's advice.

To sterilize, place bottles and nipples in a covered pan of boiling water for 5 minutes. If you own a dishwasher, rinse the bottles after use. Wash in the dishwasher's bottom rack.

Keep prepared formula in the refrigerator, not in a diaper bag or on the kitchen counter.

If you are going on a trip, keep formula cold in an insulated thermos bottle. Or carry it in an insulated container with a freezer gel pack or on ice.

If you can't keep the formula cold, or for longer trips, take unopened cans of ready-to-use formula.

Never save partly-used bottles for another feeding. As the baby drinks from a bottle, bacteria move from the baby's mouth into the bottle. Saving the bottle for another feeding allows time for the bacteria to grow and contaminate the formula (even if it is in the refrigerator).

Sterilize bottles and nipples for infants until they are over 5 months old.



Baby Food

When you begin feeding baby food, remove some of the food from the jar and put it in a bowl or on a plate.

When you feed your baby from a spoon, saliva from the baby's mouth will get on the spoon. If you feed your baby directly from the jar, the saliva from the spoon will get into the jar. Just as bacteria enter the bottle, bacteria will get into the food.

Feed each child from a separate plate or bowl, with a separate spoon. Using the same plate, bowl, or spoon passes bacteria from one child to another.

Throw away uneaten food on a child's plate—it contains bacteria. If uneaten food is kept, the bacteria have a chance to grow and contaminate the food.

Microwave Safely

It's important to use the microwave safely for heating formula or baby food. Microwaves heat unevenly, so the formula or food will have "hot spots" that could burn your baby's mouth. Some containers should not be heated in a microwave.

To microwave a hard plastic or glass bottle with formula:

Fill the bottle with formula.

Do not place the nipple and cap on the bottle.

Heat 8 ounces of cold formula or milk on high for 30 seconds.

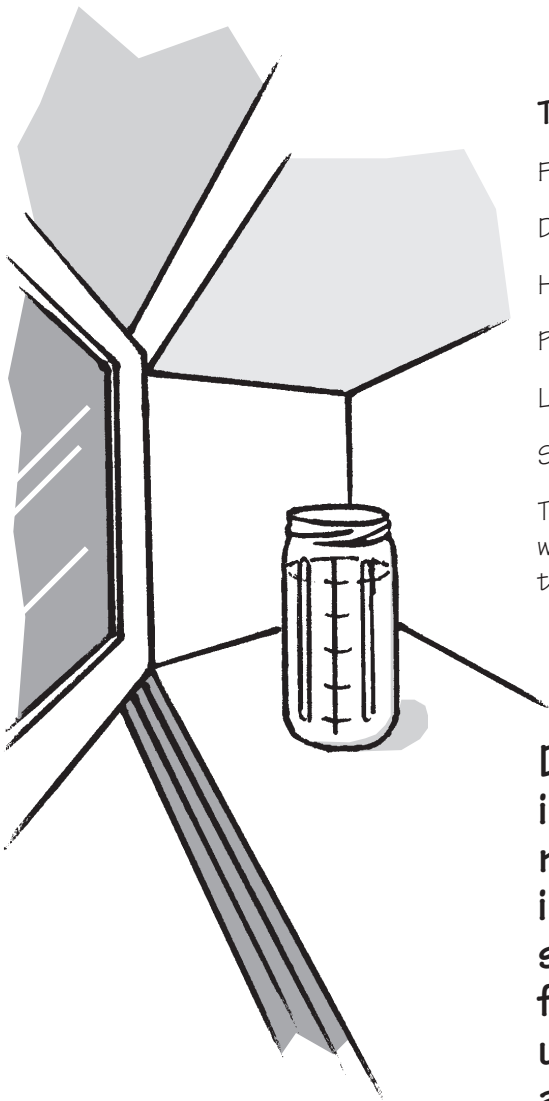
Place the cap and nipple on the bottle.

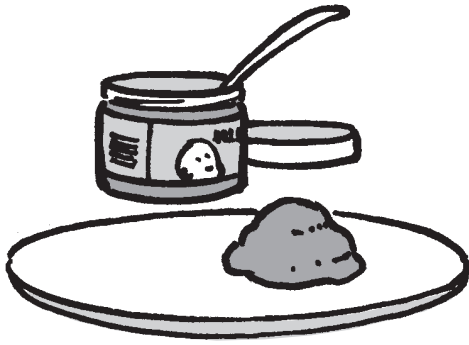
Let stand for one minute.

Shake the bottle well.

Test the temperature by shaking some liquid on top of your hand. The wrist is one of the least heat-sensitive areas. Do not test the temperature on your wrist.

DO NOT heat a bottle with a disposable plastic insert in a microwave oven! The hot spots in microwaved milk may weaken the seams of the insert. This may cause the insert to burst and spill hot milk on the baby. Instead, place the filled disposable insert under hot tap water until the milk is warm enough. This should take about 2 minutes.





To heat baby food:

Remove baby food from the jar to a microwave-safe plate. Never microwave baby food in the jar. The hot spots can cause burns. The thick, unevenly-heated food is also a good place for bacteria to grow.

Heat 4 ounces of food for 15 seconds at high power.

Stir and let stand for 30 seconds.

Taste-test before using. The food should feel lukewarm to you.

Since fats heat faster in a microwave than other substances, never microwave baby food meats or eggs. These have high fat content and can splatter and overheat.

Safe Storage Of Baby Food

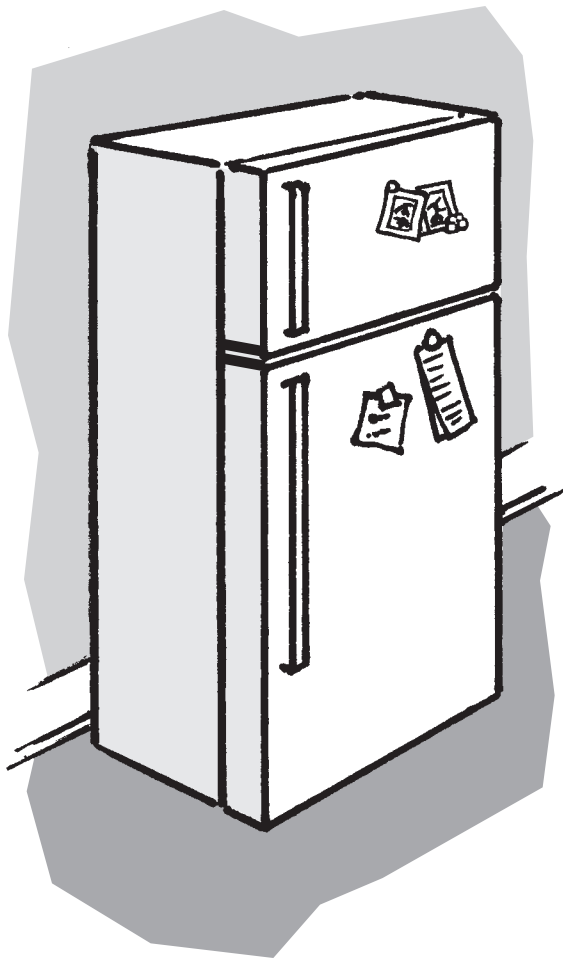
| | Refrigerator | Freezer |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| LIQUIDS | | |
| Expressed breast milk | 5 days | 3 to 4 months |
| Formula | 2 days | not recommended |
| SOLIDS—opened or freshly made | | |
| Strained fruits and vegetables | 2 to 3 days | 6 to 8 months |
| Strained meats and eggs | 1 day | 1 to 2 months |
| Meat-vegetable combinations | 1 to 2 days | 1 to 2 months |
| Homemade baby foods | 1 to 2 days | 3 to 4 months |

SPECIAL HANDLING

- 1) For shelf storage of unopened cans of formula observe "Use by" dates printed on containers.
- 2) Observe "Use by" date for shelf storage of unopened jars.
- 3) Check to see that the safety button on the lid is down. If the jar lid does not "pop" when opened for the first time, do not use.

NOTE: Don't leave baby food, juice, or formula at room temperature for more than 2 hours after opening.

Adapted from Williamson, C. and G. Cataldo. Microwave-Safe For Baby. Food News For Consumers, United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 8:8-9, 1992.



Dirty Diapers

Feces are full of bacteria, which get on your hands when you change dirty diapers.

The bacteria can pass from your hands to contaminate other children, toys, food, and anything else you touch.

**Wash your hands with hot, soapy water—
After changing diapers.
After wiping runny noses.
After using the bathroom.
Before handling food.**

Keep the changing table clean:

Make a disinfecting solution and place in a spray bottle to be kept next to the changing table.

Spray the changing table with disinfecting solution and wipe dry with a clean paper towel after changing each child's diapers.

Throw away paper towels immediately after use.

Don't forget to wash your hands!

Disinfecting Solution:

1 teaspoon liquid bleach

1 quart warm water



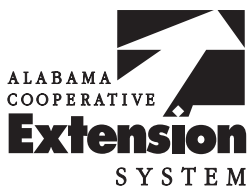
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For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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