

UNICEF UK

BABY FRIENDLY INITIATIVE

GUIDE TO BOTTLE FEEDING¹



This English language document is designed to be used in conjunction with our foreign language resources available at: [unicef.uk/babyfriendly-translations](https://www.unicef.uk/babyfriendly-translations)



If you have decided to bottle feed your baby, this infosheet will support you to do this as safely as possible. You may be feeding your own expressed milk with a bottle or you may have decided to feed formula milk only. If you are feeding your baby formula milk in addition to your breast milk it is important to continue to give as much breast milk as possible because of the health benefits breast milk provides. If you want to return to full breastfeeding at any time, ask your midwife or health visitor for help.

Which milk to use?

Always use infant / first milk for the first year as this is all your baby needs. Change to full fat cow's milk when your baby is one year old.

Tips for bottle feeding

It is best for just you and your partner to feed your baby in the early weeks. This will help your baby to feel safe and secure, get used to your way of feeding, and enable you to form a close and loving bond with them.

- Hold your baby close to you, in a slightly upright position.
- Look into your baby's eyes and talk gently to them.
- Gently rub the teat against your baby's top lip to encourage them to open their mouth and poke their tongue out.



¹ Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby. If you decide not to breastfeed or to stop breastfeeding, it is possible to restart. Giving infant formula to a breastfed baby will reduce your milk supply. You do not need to eat any special foods while breastfeeding, but it is a good idea for you, just like everyone else, to eat a healthy diet.

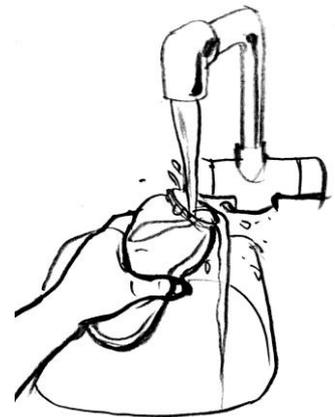
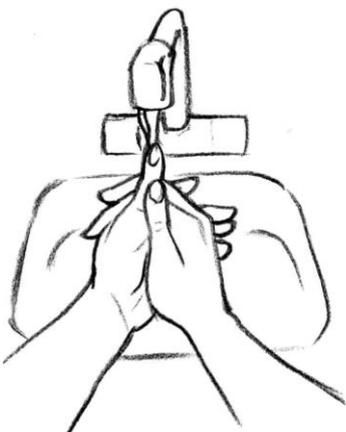
- Place the teat into their mouth allowing them to draw it back into their mouth.
- Remove the teat to give your baby a break at intervals throughout the feed.
- Don't force your baby to take all the milk if they don't want it.
- Discard any leftover milk if not used within one hour.



Sterilising bottles and other feeding equipment

Before sterilising, clean and rinse

- First wash your hands well with soap and water and clean the work surfaces with hot soapy water.
- Wash the feeding bottle and teat in hot, soapy water using a clean bottle brush.
- Rinse all your equipment in clean, cold running water before sterilising.

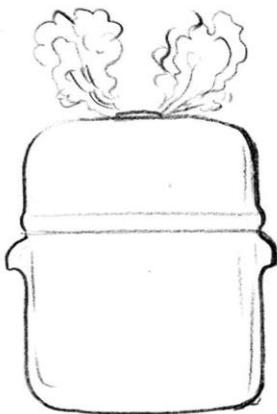
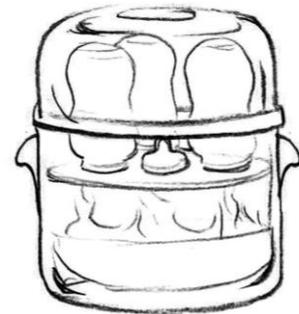


Sterilising systems

- Read the information related to the type of steriliser you are using.

Cold water sterilising solution

- Make up fresh sterilising fluid every 24 hours using the correct amount of water to sterilising tablet(s).
- Place clean equipment in the steriliser, put the floating cover on top and make sure there are no air bubbles trapped in bottles.
- Leave feeding equipment in the sterilising solution for at least 30 minutes and rinse off solution with boiled water before making up feed.

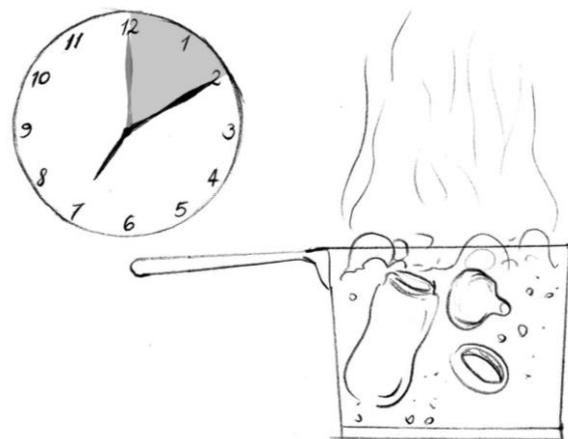


Steam sterilising (electric steriliser or microwave)

- As there are different types of steriliser it is important to follow the manufacturer's instructions. If you are unsure, ask your midwife or health visitor to show you how to use it.

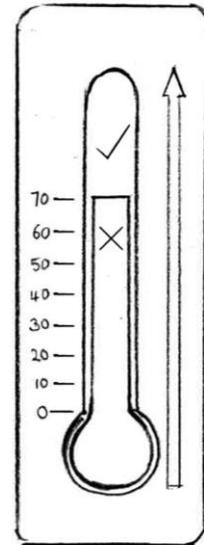
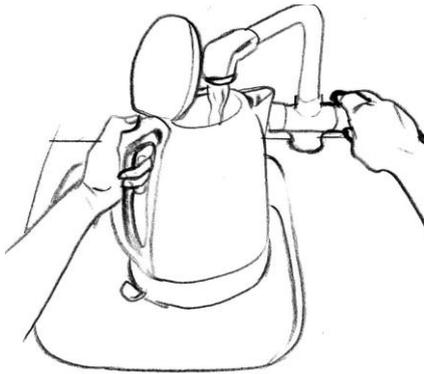
Sterilising by boiling

- Place clean feeding equipment in a large saucepan and make sure it is covered with water. Bring to the boil and boil for at least 10 minutes.
- It is best to use the bottles and teats straight after you have boiled them, but if not, put them together fully with the teat and lid in place to prevent the inside of the bottle and teat from becoming contaminated.
- Check regularly that teats and bottles are not torn, cracked or damaged.



How to make up a feed

- Wash your hands carefully before you start and clean the area where you are preparing the feed.
- Fill the kettle with at least 1 litre of fresh tap water from the cold tap. Do not use water that has been previously boiled, artificially softened, or bottled water, as these may not be safe for the baby.²
- Boil the water and leave it to cool in the kettle for no more than 30 minutes so that it remains at a temperature of at least 70°C.



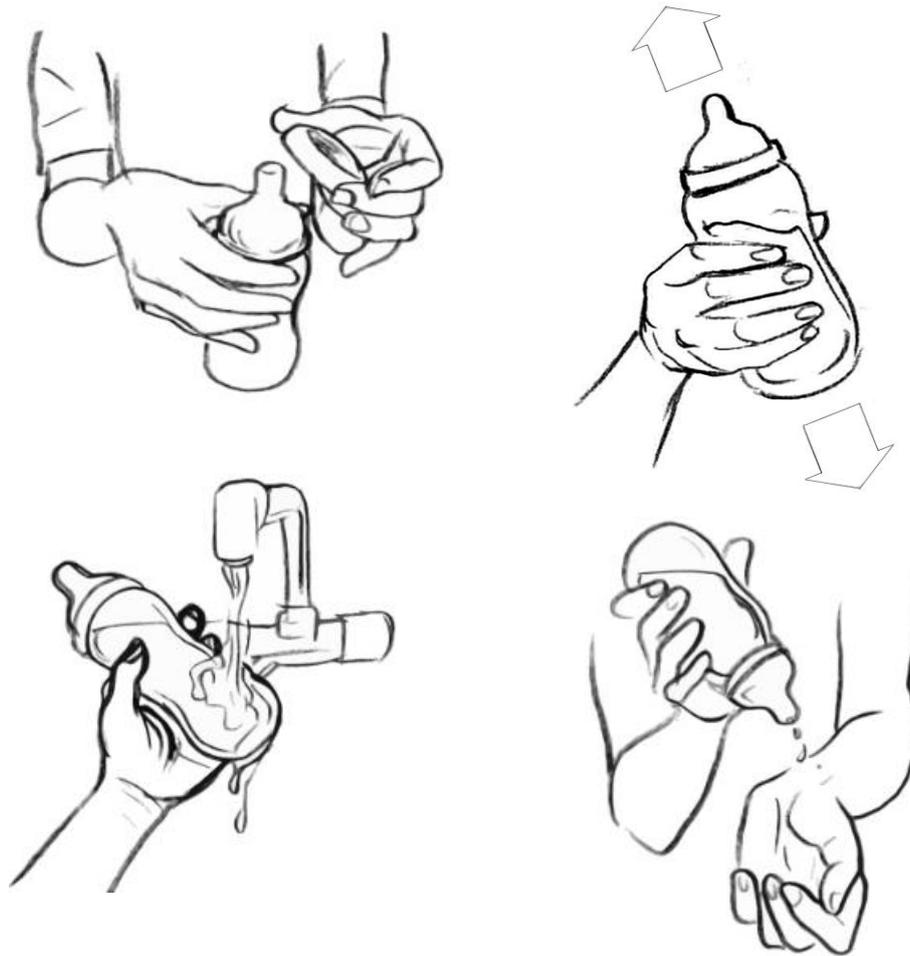
- Stand the bottle on a clean surface but keep the teat and cap on the lid of the steriliser or in the saucepan to keep it clean.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and pour the correct amount of water into the bottle.
- Fill the scoop provided in the tin with formula and level it off using either the flat edge of a clean, dry knife or the leveller provided.
- Put the powder into the bottle with the water, using the correct number of scoops for the amount of water as indicated in the manufacturers' instructions.



- Holding the edge of the teat, put it on the bottle. Then screw the retaining ring onto the bottle. Cover the teat with the cap and shake the bottle until the powder is dissolved.
- Cool the formula by holding the bottom half of the bottle under cold running water. Test the temperature on the inside of your wrist before giving it to your

² This information is for use in the UK – please refer to local guidelines regarding tap water when making up formula in a different country.

baby. It should be body temperature, which means it should feel warm or cool, but not hot.



Safety issues

Make up bottles freshly for each feed. Storing feeds - even if in a fridge - can allow bacteria to grow in the milk, which could make your baby sick.

Use fresh tap water from the cold tap. Do not use water that has been previously boiled, artificially softened or bottled water as this may not be safe for your baby.³

Always use the scoop provided in the tin and follow instructions to make sure your baby gets the correct mixture of powder and water.

Do not add anything else (including sugar, cereals or chocolate powder) to the bottle.

Never warm up infant formula in a microwave as it can heat the feed unevenly (causing 'hot spots') and may burn your baby's mouth.

³ This information is for use in the UK – please refer to local guidelines regarding tap water when making up formula in a different country.

Feeding away from home

If you need to feed your baby away from home it is better to use ready-to-feed infant formula milk with an empty sterilised feeding bottle. If this is not possible, store a made-up feed in a cooler bag with an ice pack for a maximum of four hours.

If made-up formula is stored at room temperature, use within two hours - but do not make a habit of doing this.