

Formula Feeding for 6- to 9-Month-Olds

Deciding how to feed your 6- to 9-month-old isn't always easy. Breastfeeding or chestfeeding is best for your child's growth and development. But sometimes, for medical or personal reasons, store-bought infant formula is used instead of, or in addition to, human milk.

Make an Informed Choice

Make sure you have all the information you need to make an informed choice. Contact your health care provider or public health nurse, or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1. They can talk with you about the benefits, risks and costs of each option. And if you decide to use formula, they can help you choose the type that's best for your child.



DID YOU KNOW?

The World Health Organization, Health Canada, Dietitians of Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society and the B.C. Ministry of Health all recommend that babies be fed only human milk for the first 6 months. After your baby is eating solid family foods, human milk remains an important source of nutrition. If possible, continue to breastfeed or chestfeed until your child is 2 years or older.

If You Use Formula

Breastfeed or chestfeed, too, if you can

Give your child human milk whenever possible. If you feed your child formula, try to give it *in addition* to your own milk (see [Supplementing for 6- to 9-Month-Olds](#)).

If you're not currently breastfeeding or chestfeeding but hope to breastfeed or chestfeed your child in the future, talk with your health care provider about how to keep up your milk supply. Or find a lactation coach through the British Columbia Lactation Consultants Association (bclca.ca).

Use formula safely

Follow the directions on the formula label to prepare it correctly. Safe preparation and storage of formula are important for your baby's health. If you have questions about safely preparing and storing formula, contact your health care provider or public health nurse. You can also call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 or visit www.healthlinkbc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/hfile69b_0.pdf for more information.

Health Canada inspects all store-bought infant formulas for safety and nutrition. But it's possible for formula to come into contact with bacteria or to be missing an ingredient. To check for product recalls, visit recalls-rappels.canada.ca/en.



DANGER

If you use infant formula, choose only store-bought cow's milk-based varieties (or store-bought soy-based formula, if your child can't have cow's milk). Other beverages don't provide the nutrition your 6- to 9-month-old needs.

Never use these in place of infant formula for your 6- to 9-month-old:

- ✗ evaporated or condensed milk
- ✗ regular cow's milk, goat's milk or other animal milks (okay after 9 to 12 months only)
- ✗ nut "milks," like almond, cashew and coconut drinks
- ✗ other "milks," like rice, oat, potato, soy and hemp drinks
- ✗ homemade formula



BE AWARE

Using a home machine to prepare infant formula can be unsafe. The machine may not heat the water enough to kill any bacteria the formula might contain, and it may not dispense the right amount of powder.

The safest way to make powdered formula is to use boiled water cooled to 70°C.



KEY TAKEAWAY

Although human milk is best for your 6- to 9-month-old, sometimes formula is necessary. If you need or want to use formula but feel uncomfortable or guilty about doing so, talk with your health care provider. And remember that no matter how you feed your child, you can use feeding times to build a close and loving bond.

Ensure your water is safe for making formula

In most B.C. communities, drinking water is typically treated at a water treatment plant so that it is safe to drink at the tap. If you have your own water source (i.e. a private well) you should test your drinking water regularly. For more information on well water testing, see: healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/well-water-testing.

Some buildings have plumbing that contains lead. In some situations, lead can leach from plumbing and into drinking water at the tap which can cause a health impact for infants and children. For more information on lead in drinking water, see: healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/lead-drinking-water

Be sure that your water is safe before using it to make infant formula. When preparing formula, do not use:

- ✗ water from the hot side of the tap
- ✗ discoloured water that hasn't been tested
- ✗ specialty nursery or baby waters
- ✗ carbonated or flavoured waters
- ✗ water known to contain high levels of nitrate, fluoride, sodium, lead, manganese or bluegreen algae (cyanobacteria)

If you don't have access to safe water or are unsure of whether it is safe, use ready-to-feed liquid formula or make powdered formula using bottled water.

If you have questions or concerns about your drinking water contact your local health unit, health authority or your First Nations government office. Visit gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/water-quality/drinking-water-quality/health-authority-contacts



BE AWARE

Boiling won't get rid of dangerous chemicals in water, and may instead make them more concentrated.

