

Formula and bottle feeding: your questions answered

To help support you in your choice we have looked at some of the most commonly asked questions, answered by our midwives and health visitors:

Which brand of formula is best?

There are several brands of infant formula with different company names. There is no evidence that one company's milk is better for your baby than any other. If you think that one company's milk disagrees with your baby, try another company's milk and speak to your midwife or health visitor.

There are also different types of milk e.g. first milk, second milk, follow-on milk, etc. You need to be very careful about which type of milk you use as this could affect your baby's health. Always read the labels very carefully.

What types of infant formula are there?

First milks are best for newborn babies as they are based on the whey of cow's milk and are more easily digested than the other milks. Unless your doctor or health visitor suggests otherwise, this is the best type of infant formula for your baby, continuing when you are weaning your baby at 6 months, until they are a year old and able to have cow's milk.

I am a vegetarian, can I give my baby soya milk?

Soya formula contains high levels of a chemical called phytoestrogen which may have negative effects on babies and so should only be used in exceptional circumstances and only under the recommendation of a doctor. It is also thought to provoke allergies.

It is true that bottle fed baby suffer with constipation?

Often this can be resolved with closer attention to the way in which the feed is made up, or possibly by changing brands. Ask your health visitor for advice.

Should I buy a certain type of bottle and teats?

Teats can be made from rubber or silicone and vary in shape. There is no evidence that one teat is better than another. It is fine to try different teats and use the one that suits your baby best. All feeding bottles are made of food-grade plastic, but some shapes and patterns on bottles can make them difficult to clean. A simple, easy-to-clean bottle is probably best.

Can I give my baby ordinary cow's milk?

Do not give your baby ordinary cow's milk as a drink until he is one year old, as it is not nutritionally suitable until then.