

## A Parent's Guide to Infant Feeding

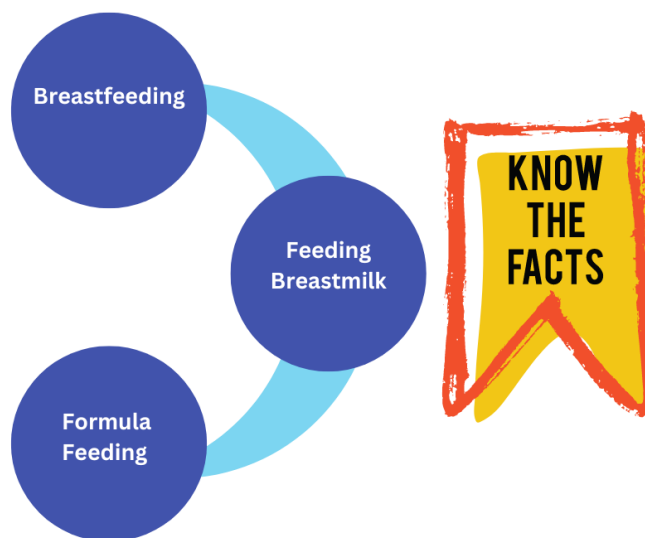
There is a lot of information about infant feeding available to families. Sometimes it can be difficult to figure out what information is correct. Here are some tips to help!

Not all information that you hear or see in print is accurate and factual. The decisions that you make about infant feeding should be based on **credible sources of information**. Consider possible motives for the information. Look for sponsors that could benefit if the information is followed by the public. Example: A company that is wanting to sell something often has information but the information can be biased to try to sway people to buy the company's products.



**Try to verify the source of the information.** Information from recognized organizations, universities, and health care providers has a greater likelihood of being accurate than information found on commercial sites, sites that try to create controversy, or sites where a celebrity is promoting a product or cause.

**Check the evidence that supports the information.** Information that is confirmed by a number of experts on the topic is likely information that you can trust. Also, check to see when the information was last updated. Information that has not been updated or verified for many years might no longer be accurate even if it was accurate in the past.



## What do health experts say about infant feeding?

[The World Health Organization, UNICEF, and Health Canada](#) recommend that babies be exclusively breastfed for 6 months and continue to breastfeed, with the additional of appropriate complementary foods, up to age 2 years and beyond.



## Are there any medical reasons not to breastfeed?



There are a few medical conditions and treatments where breastfeeding isn't recommended. A [list](#) of conditions can be found on the website of the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada.

## How different is infant formula compared to breastmilk?

Breastmilk is uniquely created to meet the needs of human babies. It contains the right amount of the right ingredients and the ingredients are easily absorbed by baby's body. It provides excellent nutrition as well as immune protection. The composition of breastmilk changes during every feeding, from feeding to feeding, and over time as baby grows.



Commercial infant formula can provide baby with adequate nutrition so that baby can grow and develop. The ingredients in infant formula can be seen on the packaging. The protein in infant formula usually comes from cow's milk or soy. Manufacturers sometimes add ingredients such as nucleotides, prebiotics and probiotics to try to make infant formula more like human milk. Breastmilk, however, has many components that are not found in commercial infant formula and cannot be replicated in a laboratory. All infant formula has an expiry date and should not be used once expired. Infant formula is also subject to product alerts and recalls.

## How different is one brand of infant formula from another brand?



All commercial infant formulas in Canada are subject to specific [mandatory nutrient requirements](#) set by Health Canada. Commercial infant formulas are available in powder, liquid concentrate, and ready-to-feed. The nutrients, however, remain the same. Some infant formulas have additional ingredients but research findings about advantages of these additives are inconclusive.

## Is it better to get donor human milk to supplement my baby than to supplement with infant formula?

Research shows that pasteurized donor human milk improves infant health outcomes compared to infant formula. Pasteurized donor human milk is available from human milk banks for babies who are premature and/or sick and vulnerable. [The Human Milk Banking Association of North America \(HMBANA\)](#) sets international guidelines for pasteurized donor human milk and accredits nonprofit milk banks in Canada and the United States. Canada currently has 4 human milk banks located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal.



Health Canada cautions against feeding donor human milk from private sources, milk sharing programs, or the internet. Human milk from these sources could be unsafe and cause health issues for the baby receiving the donated milk. Inadequate health screening of the person donating the milk, processing the milk in an unsafe manner, and incorrect storage of the milk can cause harm to the baby. You can learn more on [Health Canada's website](#).

## Where can I learn about formula recalls?

Health Canada posts product recalls including recalls of infant formula. Link is <https://recalls-rappels.canada.ca/en>



**MAKE AN  
INFORMED  
DECISION!**