

Changing Formulas

UPDATED JUNE 2022

When I change my baby's formula, what should I expect?

Sometimes it is necessary to change your infant to a new formula and you may be concerned if it is safe. It may be helpful to know that all standard infant formulas are nutritionally equivalent and must meet the same nutrient content standards based on government regulations.

When changing formulas, it is normal that your baby may experience a little fussiness or spitting up. Your baby may have some minor symptoms such as:

- Increased burping, spitting up, or gas
- Change in stool color or firmness (such as looser or firmer)
- Reaction to a new taste

All of these minor symptoms are normal and temporary. Increased burping and gas may last a few days. A slight change in stool color is not a problem. This change may also happen when you add solid foods to your baby's diet. Be sure to check the instructions on the formula packaging to make sure you are properly mixing the formula. Most babies will adjust to the new taste quickly and easily.

How can I safely switch to a new formula?

Most babies can change to a new formula without any problems. If you think your baby is having a difficult time changing formulas, talk to your WIC Nutritionist and follow the directions below.

To begin the transition with a 4-ounce bottle, you may mix equal parts of the old formula with the new formula for two to three days, then gradually provide only the new formula. If you are starting with a larger size bottle, you may transition more slowly. This can be done by replacing one scoop of the old formula with the new formula every two days. This transition schedule can be done with less than a can of formula.

Example: For a baby using a 4-ounce bottle

Day 1- Place 4 ounces water in bottle

 Add 1 scoops old formula

 Add 1 scoop new formula

Day 2- Follow Day 1 instructions

Day 3- Follow Day 1 instructions

Day 4- Place 4 ounces of water in bottle

 Add 2 scoops of new formula

Day 5- Follow Day 4 instructions (baby should be adjusting to the new formula)

Example: For a baby using a 6-ounce bottle

Day 1- Place 6 ounces water in bottle

Add 2 scoops old formula

Add 1 scoop new formula

Day 2- Follow Day 1 instructions

Day 3- Place 6 ounces of water in bottle

Add 1 scoops old formula

Add 2 scoops of new formula

Follow- Day 3 instructions

Day 4- Place 6 ounces of water in bottle

Add 3 scoops of new formula

Day 5- Follow Day 4 instructions (baby should be adjusting to the new formula)

How can I tell if baby is not tolerating the new formula?

Most babies will accept the gradual change to a new formula. If your baby turns their head away or refuses the bottle of new formula, it may be a sign that they are still adjusting to the flavor. There are times when a baby is **not** tolerating the new formula. If you notice any of the signs below, stop offering the formula and contact your healthcare provider right away.

Signs of a formula intolerance:

- Diarrhea
- Blood or mucus in stools
- Vomiting
- Showing signs of pain (pulling legs up toward the abdomen while crying)
- Trouble gaining weight

Things to keep in mind:

- Never use home-made infant formula.
- Carefully read and follow the mixing instructions on the formula can.
- Use a safe water source to mix your infant formula.
- A baby's stool may look or smell different when you change formulas.
- If your baby experiences problems when you give a new formula, contact your local WIC office or your healthcare provider for guidance.

CHANGING FORMULAS

For information on feeding with formula, see the **WIC nutrition education card [Bottle Feeding Your Baby \(PDF\)](#)**
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/nutrition/english/infbottle.pdf>)

For more information on safe formula handling, see the **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Infant Formula Preparation and Storage](#)**
(<https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/infantandtoddlernutrition/formula-feeding/infant-formula-preparation-and-storage.html>)

For additional question reach out to your **local WIC office: [Minnesota WIC Agency Directory](#)**
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/forms/cfh/wicdirectory/>)

Minnesota Department of Health - WIC Program, 85 E 7th Place, PO BOX 64882, ST PAUL MN 55164-0882; 1-800-657-3942, health.wic@state.mn.us, www.health.state.mn.us; to obtain this information in a different format, call: 1-800-657-3942.

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