GUIDE TO MAKING UP A BOTTLEFEED

Preparing your baby's bottle safely is important, and taking a few easy steps helps make sure every feed is just right for your little one. Because powdered milks are not sterile, it is important to follow these instructions for powdered milks to prevent your baby from being ill. Preparation methods for specialist milks may vary.



1. Wash and sterilise bottles and teats according to manufacturer's instructions. Wash your hands and wipe clean all surfaces to prevent the spread of germs.



2. Boil 1 litre of freshly run tap water and leave to cool for no longer than 30 minutes. Measure the required amount of water (refer to on-pack feeding guide) into a sterilised bottle. Do not use artificially softened or repeatedly boiled water.



3. For accurate dosage, always use scoop provided and level off powder with built-in leveller (if provided). Alternatively, level with a clean, dry knife. Do not press or heap the powder into the scoop.



4. Add the correct measure of powder to the water (1 scoop to 30ml /1 fl.oz of water). Adding too many or too few scoops can be harmful. Place the sterilised teat and cap on the bottle and **shake immediately, vertically and vigorously for at least 10 seconds, until the powder is dissolved**.



5. Cool the bottle under a running tap. Check temperature of milk by allowing some drops to fall on your wrist. If it feels comfortable (lukewarm, not hot), it should be just right for the baby. Do not heat feeds in a microwave as hot spots can occur and cause scalding.

Use made-up feeds within two hours. Once used, discard any leftover milk, wash bottles and teats, and re-sterilise, ready for next feed.

HOW TO MAKE A BATCH OF PREPARED FEEDS[1]

It is safest to prepare a fresh feed each time you need one. However, sometimes you may need to make a batch of feeds that will last you 24 hours.

To safely store a batch of made-up bottles[1]:



- Make up the number of feeds required following the steps above.
- Place the cooled bottles in the back of the fridge (not in the door of the fridge, to ensure the temperature of the feeds is kept stable).
- Make sure the temperature of the fridge is set to 5°C or less.
- The feeds stored at the back of the fridge can be used for up to 24 hours. Discard any feed not used after this.

FORMULA FEEDING AWAY FROM HOME[1]



- **For short journeys (<2 hours)**, make a bottle at home and store it in the fridge. Take it out of the fridge just before you leave and place in a cool bag with an ice pack. When you arrive, place the bottles in a fridge as soon as you can.

- **For longer journeys** (more than 2 hours), or if you have no way to keep bottles cold on a shorter journey, you can use ready-to-feed liquid formula. Shake well and pour into a sterilised feeding bottle. Serve at room temperature or warm if desired.

- If neither of the above options are possible, and if your baby is older than 2 months, you can prepare sterile bottles of water at home. To do this, pour the required amount of freshly boiled water (without cooling) into a sterilised feeding bottle. Place the teat and lid on the bottle and allow to cool at room temperature. Bring the powder and bottles of sterile water with you and make up the feeds when needed. This option is not as safe as the first two options, but it is safer than bringing made-up bottles and trying to keep them cool for longer than 2 hours.



OTHER FORMULA PREPARATION METHODS[2, 3]

Baby formula preparation machines and flasks

The HSE and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland do not recommend using automatic formula preparation machines or flasks as there is not enough research to show these machines are safe and effective for preparing formula feeds.

Boiling water taps

Boiling water taps are not recommended for preparing formula feeds. The safest way to prepare water for a feed is to use a kettle and follow the step-by-step guide.

Bottled water

It may be necessary to use bottled water to make up feeds if you have a water softener system, have been told to boil your tap water before use or if you are on holiday abroad. When using bottled water, always boil the water before using it to make up feeds. Use still water only, never fizzy or sparkling water, and avoid using bottled water labelled as 'natural mineral water' as this can have higher levels of sodium and other minerals.

A note on sterilising[2]

To sterilise bottle-feeding equipment, steam is the best. Plug in and microwavable options are available. You can also use boiling water or a chemical steriliser. UV sterilisers are not recommended as there is not enough research to show that these machines are safe and effective.

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Important notice: Breastfeeding is best for babies and provides many benefits. It is important that, in preparation for and during breastfeeding, you eat a varied, balanced diet. Combined breast and bottle feeding in the first weeks of life may reduce the supply of your own breastmilk, and reversing the decision not to breastfeed is difficult. The social and financial implications of using an infant formula should be considered. Improper use of an infant formula or inappropriate foods or feeding methods may present a health hazard. If you use an infant formula, you should follow manufacturer's instructions for use carefully – failure to follow the instructions may make your baby ill. Always consult your doctor, midwife or health visitor for advice about feeding your baby.

References: 1. Safefood & HSE How to Prepare your baby's bottle Available at: https://www.safefood.net/ [Accessed March 2026]. 2. HSE Preparing baby formula [Accessed March 2026]. 3. FSAI Bottle Feeding Safely - Expressed Breast Milk or Formula | Food Safety Authority of Ireland [Accessed March 2026].

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