

Choosing the Right Formula

Choosing whether to breastfeed or feed your baby formula is a big decision for expectant and new parents. Breastfeeding helps build your baby's immune system and has health benefits for mom too. But breastfeeding may not be possible for all new moms.

For moms who can't breastfeed, who decide not to, or who are supplementing breastfeeding with formula, formula is a safe and healthy alternative. There are several types of formulas including Cow's milk formula, Soy-based formula, and Hypoallergenic formula. For most babies, Cow's milk formula is the best choice. The proteins in this formula have been modified so they are easier for your baby to digest. You can buy cow's milk formula in powder, liquid, or concentrate.

If your baby is allergic to cow's milk, soy-based formulas are an alternative.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, soy-based formulas are good for babies with certain rare diseases, but the AAP recommends giving your baby cow's milk formula when possible. It's important to point out Soy-milk formulas do not reduce milk allergies or help prevent colic.

Hypoallergenic or Extensively Hydrolysed Protein formula is made from cow's milk. This formula contains protein which has been broken down to create much smaller amounts than found in cow's milk and soy formulas. These formulas are made for babies with milk allergies, gastrointestinal problems, or who were born prematurely.

Whatever formula is best for your baby, remember to wash your hands before handling formula and carefully follow any mixing and storage instructions. If you have questions about the best formula for your baby, ask your pediatrician.

The decision to breastfeed or formula feed your baby is a personal one. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of breastfeeding and formula feeding to make the right choice for both you and your baby.