



Introducing formula for medical reasons

Patient information

Breastmilk is a unique, living source of food that provides all the essential nutrients your baby needs for healthy growth and development.

However, in the early days after birth, some babies may require additional feed volumes for medical conditions such as dehydration, low blood sugar and jaundice.

This temporary need for extra milk continues until your breastmilk supply naturally increases.

If formula is prescribed, your doctor or midwife will explain the medical reasons and obtain your consent.

Since formula differs from colostrum and breastmilk, it is given in larger volumes to meet your baby's specific needs.

This can affect how actively your baby breastfeeds, so it's important to protect your milk supply by expressing your breastmilk after each feed.

As your expressed milk production increases, you will be able to replace the formula with your own milk gradually.

This process may take **several weeks** and you may be discharged from midwifery care before transitioning to exclusive breastfeeding.

It is recommended you make an appointment with a lactation consultant who can offer support and guidance during this time.

How to support your milk supply while using formula

- **Skin-to-skin contact** helps stimulate breastfeeding hormones and encourages your baby's natural feeding behaviours.
- **Offer a breastfeed and expressed breast milk** before giving formula as needed. This helps increase your supply so that expressed breast milk can replace formula over time.
- **Express your breast milk after breastfeeds** to provide extra milk for your baby and prevent engorgement (full, uncomfortable breasts).
- **Seek professional support** to ensure your baby is positioned and attached to the breast correctly. Correct positioning will ensure breastfeeding is comfortable and help increase breastmilk supply sooner.



The benefits of breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding strengthens your baby's immune system by supporting the development of a healthy gut microbiome.
- Breast milk provides protection against infections and serious illnesses throughout life, including but not limited to obesity, diabetes and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Breastfeeding promotes brain development. The close physical and emotional bonding during feeding also nurtures socio-emotional growth.
- Breastfeeding is linked to a lower incidence of postpartum depression and anxiety, supporting emotional wellbeing in new mothers.
- Women who breastfeed have a lower risk of developing breast and ovarian cancers.
- Breastfeeding is environmentally friendly.

Support and follow-up

Face-to-face or telehealth appointments are available at the Breastfeeding Centre of WA, at King Edward Memorial Hospital. Call (08) 6458 1844 or visit the website.



Scan the QR code for more resources on breastfeeding.

For more information, contact the Australian Breastfeeding Association Breastfeeding Helpline on 1800 686 268 or visit the website www.breastfeeding.asn.au

HealthyWA

<https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au>

Droplet

<https://firstdroplets.com/>



The information provided is for information purposes only. If you are a patient using this publication, you should seek assistance from a healthcare professional when interpreting these materials and applying them to your individual circumstances.



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