



FACT SHEET

INFANT FORMULA

Breastfeeding is the ideal means for nourishing infants from birth. Unfortunately, not every mother can or does breastfeed and in this case, formula is the only acceptable option for the first 12 months.

All formula in Australia is required to meet stringent government standards of hygiene and nutritional quality. The marketing of formula is governed by the MAIF Agreement.

Cow's milk is not recommended as the main milk drink for infants because it is too high in protein and sodium and too low in iron.

Regular formula is based on cow's milk, which is modified to be suitable for infants. Spray-dried skim milk powder is the base, added to which are accurate quantities of fats, carbohydrate, protein, vitamins and minerals to meet the requirements of the Australian Food Standards Code, Standard 2.9.1 *Infant Formula Products*. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) regulates the quality, composition and labelling of infant formula.

Human breast milk is used as the reference for establishing minimum and maximum levels of nutrients in formula. Formula is either whey dominant or casein dominant. Whey and casein are the two main proteins in cow's milk in a ratio of 20:80. Breast milk has a whey to casein ratio of 60:40. Heinz Nurture® Infant Formula has a whey to casein ratio of 60:40 similar to breastmilk. Heinz Nurture® Follow-On has a whey to casein ratio of 80:20 which is more satisfying for older babies.

Optional ingredients which may be added to formula include: long chain polyunsaturated fats (LCPs), nucleotides, taurine, choline and carnitine in specified amounts. For healthy term infants all formulas available in Australia are suitable, nutritious choices for the infant's growth and development. Choice of infant formula should be determined by availability, price, and ease of preparation. (*Refer to Facts about LCPs, Facts about Nucleotides*)

It is important to check that the formula is prepared correctly, using the correct scoop for that formula, otherwise the formula may be too weak or too concentrated. Studies have shown that mothers do switch formulas and interchange scoops. Heinz Nurture® formulas have colour coded scoops to match the can to minimise the risk of this happening.

Freshly boiled water which has been cooled, should be used to prepare infant formula. Bottled water is not sterile and if used it must also be boiled. It's best to make up formula as needed. If a bottle is prepared in advance, keep it in the back of the fridge (4°C) for a maximum of 12 hours. Throw away any prepared formula after 12 hours.

References

1. FSANZ, Food Standards Code, Standard 2.9.1 Infant Formula Products.
www.foodstandards.gov.au
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5. Marketing in Australia of Infant Formulas: Manufacturers and Importers Agreement. Appendix 1. Advisory Panel on the Marketing in Australia of Infant Formula, Annual Report 2000-2001.
www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/strateg/foodpolicy/apmaif.htm
6. Lilburne AM, Oates RK, Thompson S, Tong L. *Infant Feeding in Sydney: A survey of mothers who bottle feed.* Aust.Paed.J. 1988; 24: 49-54.
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