

# The Formula Decision

*When a mother considers giving formula to her baby, she needs to balance many bits of information, and fit them into her family. Here are some of the pieces worth considering:*

**Formula is not to be used without good reason!** It causes abnormal changes in a young baby's intestines - changes that last for several weeks after a single bottle. A single dose of formula before about 6 months of age can trigger allergies that might have been avoided, and may increase the risk of diabetes and other illnesses. Despite reassuring advertising, formula is not "almost" human milk.

**Smell some formula.** Taste it. Under a microscope, formula looks... white. Human milk is full of dots, blots, and blobs. It actually teems with life, like a tiny city with one manufacturing goal: the baby's health. And the taste? Melted ice cream!

**Babies need to eat.** If human milk is not available - either through the mother expressing her own milk or through human donors - and a baby is not thriving on breastfeeding alone, commercial formulas are definitely the next best thing. Babies need to eat.

**Some day, our milk banks** will be large enough, and insurance coverage will be good enough, that every baby can receive human milk, whether or not his mother breastfeeds him. Until then, formula has a very necessary place for some babies.

**Call a breastfeeding specialist** before giving formula to a young baby. There may be a surprisingly simple way to avoid early exposure.

**The healthiest children in the world** are those who breastfeed successfully for about 6 months with no other foods or drinks, and who continue to nurse well into toddlerhood or beyond.

**Most adults today were formula-fed,** and we're leading healthy, active lives.

**We also have more problems** with allergies, more intestinal problems, colds and flu, dental problems, diabetes, heart problems, and cancer than we need to. And we're a few IQ points lower than we would have been if we had been breastfed.

**If formula is used,** the older the baby is when it is introduced, the better he will be able to handle it and the less it will interfere with longterm health.

**Even a little breast milk is far better than none** at all, for as long as you can provide it.

*No two families are alike. When you've done the balancing and made a decision that feels right for you, it is right for you, no matter what decision another family makes. So there!*

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