



Formula Feeding Recommendations

The difficulty with starting formula is trying to figure out how much your baby needs? The most common tendency is to **OVERFEED** your baby! Why is this?

- 1) **Formula is ENDLESS!** It is your baby's natural reflex to suck and when an endless supply of formula is available the stomach starts to stretch to accommodate the volume of formula. Overtime the stomach size will stretch bigger and bigger if you continue to increase the amount of formula per feed.
- 2) **Drinking from a bottle nipple is easier than drinking from the breast.** The flow from a bottle nipple is instant and usually much faster. As a result the baby gets more liquid at a faster rate and does not need to work as hard. For example a baby may get 2 ounces over 15 minutes from breastfeeding but may get 4 ounces over 15 minutes while formula feeding.
- 3) **Fussiness!** One of the first thoughts that comes to mind when soothing a fussy baby is "they must be hungry." Unfortunately there are many reasons why a baby may be fussy. When a fussy breastfed baby runs out of milk they may continue to pacify on the breast or be soothed another way. A fussy formula fed baby does not run out of milk and often gets another bottle even if the problem is not hunger.
- 4) **A fat baby is a healthy baby!** This common misconception is very problematic as babies come in all different shapes and sizes. Trying to accomplish this can be dangerous.
- 5) **Pressure from grandparents and other caretakers.** Why is he so skinny? He is still hungry? Give him another bottle? He took 6 ounces for me, so you must be starving him!

"My 1 month old baby takes 6 ounce bottles and does just fine. So what's the big deal?"

Although overfed infants do well for the most part they can have some or all of the following problems.

- 1) **Increased Fussiness.** "My baby is fussy and it is because he is gassy. It must be the type of formula. Let's switch formulas. Let's buy special nipples so he won't swallow air. When he eats he feels better so he must still be hungry!" Most parents believe overfeeding helps fussiness because they stop crying when they are feeding, but it can actually make fussiness worse.
 - a. Gas is NOT from swallowed air. Gas is a byproduct of food being digested by intestinal bacteria. Overfeeding leads to lots of gas and excess gas may cause discomfort.
- 2) **More dirty diapers!** That means more diapers and more changing. It is common for babies to fuss/cry with the sensation of having to go pee or doo and, of course, afterwards when they are sitting in a dirty diaper. More dirty diapers = More fussiness.
- 3) **Spitting up and reflux:** Overfeeding can result in spitting up (more laundry) and also reflux (food and stomach acid coming back up the food pipe). Reflux in babies can be painful! What makes your babies burning reflux feel better? More formula to sooth the irritated food pipe! Then your poor baby is stuck in a vicious cycle. Many doctors will then recommend medications that can have serious side effects to treat the reflux.
- 4) **Overweight, diabetes and heart disease.** Formula fed babies are much more likely to suffer from these diseases. Formula has a high protein content and some formulas have high



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concentration of sugars like fructose. While this is already stressful to a newborn's metabolism the addition of overfeeding can make this worse.

- 5) **\$\$Wasted Money\$\$** Formula is expensive! If you do not get it for free then you are likely spending a lot of money for formula. Guess where most of the online overfeeding formula recommendation charts come from? That's right, formula companies!

So what is the correct amount to feed?

We believe that formula feeding should mimic breastfeeding as closely as possible in terms of volume, frequency, and duration. The goal is to mimic the normal metabolic tendencies of a breastfed baby. Formula feeding should end around 15 months of age. We do not recommend any Toddler Formula for a normal child.

Volume – How much to feed per day? A baby needs about 2.5 ounces of formula per pound each day to maintain normal growth, up to a MAX volume of about 25-30 ounces per day. For example: An 8 pound baby should get about 20 ounces per day ($8 \times 2.5 = 20$).

0-2 weeks: 1-2 ounces/feed

2 weeks- 2 months: 2-3 ounces/feed

2-6 months: 3-4 ounces/feed

6-15 months: 4-5 ounces/feed

Frequency – How often do they feed?

Newborns to 1 month: Feed about every 1-3 hours. 10-12 feeds per day.

2-4 months: Feed about every 2-3 hours. 8-10 feeds per day.

5-6 months: Feed about every 2-4 hours. 6-10 feeds per day.

6-12 months: Feed about every 3-4 hours. 5-8 feeds per day.

12-15 months: Feed about every 4-6 hours. 4-6 feeds per day.

Duration – How long should a feeding take?

0-1 month: Average feeds usually last 10-20 minutes.

>1 month: Feeds can last anywhere from 5-20minutes

*** Patient handouts created by Kapa'a Pediatrics are intended to give parents the most common and pertinent facts about a certain issue. If there is ever any concern that your child was given an incorrect diagnosis or is not following the usual expected course for an illness please call us to speak with a physician. (808) 634-8011***