

KNOWLEDGE on Tap

Milk feeding in the first year of life



Breastfeeding is best for infants. If possible, exclusive breastfeeding for 4–6 months is recommended.¹ Even with the introduction of complementary foods and beyond, breastfeeding can continue as long as desired.

Formula milks:

Composition is regulated by Commission delegated regulation (EU) 2106/127



Infant formula: for exclusive feeding from birth onwards

Follow-on formula: tailored to meet specific nutritional needs of infants, particularly in case of iron and calcium, from 6 months and complements their weaning food diet.

Differences human milk, formula milk, cow's milk

	Human milk (HM)	Infant formula		Follow-on formula		Cow's milk
		Pre	1	2	3	
Energy (kcal/100 ml)	65–70 (mature HM)	60–70		60–70		66
Protein ratio (casein:whey)	approx. 40:60	approx. 40:60		approx. 60:40	approx. 70:30	approx. 80:20
Carbohydrates (CH)	Lactose	Lactose	Lactose and, if applicable, max. 2g/100 ml starch or other CH	Lactose and, if applicable, starch or other CH		Lactose
Drinking amount	as needed	as needed		approx. 5 meals per day. Each newly introduced complementary meal replaces one bottle feed.		approx. 300 ml/day. 200 ml may be used for the preparation of milk cereal but not as a drink.

Functional ingredients in formulas:

(Examples in the tables do not claim to be complete)

Ingredients	Example	Efficacy	Is the use in formulas sensible?
LCPs (longchain polyunsaturated fatty acids)	Arachidonic acid (AA), Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)	supports cognitive development and visual function	Addition of DHA to infant and follow-on formulas is a legal requirement; experts also recommend addition of AA in infant formulas ²
Omega-3- and Omega-6-fatty acids	Alpha-Linolenic acid, linoleic acid	Essential fatty acids, precursors of LCPs	Required by law in infant and follow-on formula
Probiotics*	Lactobacilli (e. g. <i>L. fermentum</i>), Bifidobacteria	Forming a healthy intestinal microbiota (supporting the immune system)	Yes, because HM also contains probiotic cultures
Prebiotics*	Galacto-oligosaccharides (GOS), Fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS), Human milk oligosaccharides (HMOs)	Promotion of beneficial intestinal microbiota, positive influence on stool consistency	Yes, as also included in HM; note on origin: GOS obtained from lactose, FOS from plant sources, HMOs generated synthetically

*The safety and efficacy of the substances used should be proven by studies.³

What else is important?

- Studies show that a high protein intake during infancy increases the risk of obesity later in life. Therefore, the protein content of infant formulas should be <2g/100 kcal.
- Suitable water: boiled drinking or tap water, special baby water or mineral water labelled as suitable for babies.
Warning! Drinking water unsuitable if: from lead or newly laid copper pipes, uninspected individual wells, water filters or hot water boilers, high uranium, nitrate, lead or copper content in drinking water.
- Prepare according to instructions: Add the specified amounts using the enclosed measuring scoop, always prepare fresh before feeding and dispose of any leftovers.

Scanning the QR-Code will take you to the references



Important information:

Breastfeeding is best for babies. Infant formula should only be given upon the advice of paediatricians, midwives or other independent

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