

What does mixed feeding mean?

Mixed feeding is when you breastfeed and give bottles of infant formula.

Information you should know before you decide to mix feed:



Breastfeeding and breastmilk give your baby the very best start in life. It has lifelong benefits for you and your baby. Many women introduce bottles of infant formula early and then find they cannot breastfeed for as long as they wanted to.

Introducing infant formula too early **may** have the following effects **on you**:

- Decrease production of breastmilk
- Cause painful, swollen breasts
- Increase risk of mastitis
- Increase costs long term
- Increase workload -*preparing infant formula, cleaning & sterilising bottles & teats*

Introducing infant formula early **may** have the following effects **on your baby**:

- Bottle preference and breast refusal
- Alteration in gut flora and microbiome (good bacteria)
- Increased risk of respiratory and gastro illnesses
- Increased risk of allergy or asthma, if there is a family history of these conditions

Frequently Asked Questions

Will mixed feeding make my baby sleep longer?

Not really. Babies cry for many reasons, not always hunger. Feeding extra infant formula to make baby sleep or to settle can have the opposite effect. It can make baby irritable and lead to overfeeding. It is normal for all babies, no matter how they feed, to wake at night.

I want to breastfeed during the day and have my partner give infant formula at night. Would this work?

Milk producing hormones peak in the middle of the night. Giving bottles at night in the early months will lower your milk production, and could put you at risk of mastitis, because your breast is not emptied overnight. Due to changes in your sleep hormones after a baby is born, you are likely to wake when baby does. Breastfeeding will improve your sleep quality.

There are lots of other ways your partner can be involved in baby's care, such as changing the nappy, skin to skin contact, and play time.

I had problems feeding my baby last time and want to mixed feed my next baby.

If you have experienced previous breastfeeding issues you can talk to:

- ★ A lactation consultant
- ★ The Australian Breastfeeding Association
- ★ Your midwife
- ★ Child and Family Health Nurse

This will help you make that informed decision and plan for feeding your new baby.

I have made an informed decision and want to mixed feed. When should I introduce bottles of infant formula?

Unless there are specific issues identified, wait till around **4-6 weeks** to introduce infant formula. It can take this long for your body to fully establish your milk supply. It is best if this is done as gradually as possible. Remember, any amount of breast milk is good for your baby. Breastmilk can be expressed and offered to your baby in a bottle as an alternative to infant formula.

What should I do when I go to hospital to have the baby?

It is important to allow your baby to go to the breast frequently, so your body knows to make milk and you can breastfeed as long as you want to.

There is no need to bring formula to the hospital unless you have consulted with your midwife and have a plan.

References: ABA <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/bfinfo/mixed-feeding>
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/infant-feeding-guidelines-information-health-workers>