



## 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 formula early and find they cannot breastfeed for as long as they wanted to.

Introducing infant formula may have the following effects **for you**:

- ▶ Decrease production of breastmilk
- ▶ Painful swollen breasts when the milk 'comes in' from poor removal of milk
- ▶ Increase risk of mastitis
- ▶ Increased costs long term
- ▶ Increased workload, preparing infant formula, cleaning and sterilising bottles and teats

The consequences of mixed feeding **for your baby**:

- ▶ Bottle preference and breast refusal
- ▶ Alteration in gut flora and microbiome (good bacteria)
- ▶ Increased risks of respiratory and gastro illnesses
- ▶ In families with a history of allergy or asthma, formula may increase the risk

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Will mixed feeding make my baby sleep longer?

Not really. Baby's 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 has the risk of 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, could this work?

This will decrease your milk production. Milk producing hormones peak in the middle of the night. Giving bottles at night in the early months will lower your supply, and could put you at risk of developing mastitis. Due to the changes in your sleep hormones after a baby is born you will likely wake when baby wakes at night anyway. Breastfeeding will improve your sleep quality.

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

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

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

- ▶ A Lactation Consultant
- ▶ Your Midwife
- ▶ The Australian Breastfeeding Association
- ▶ 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 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 has benefits to 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 in 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>