

The Importance of Choosing the Best Baby Formula

Most doctors recommend that new mothers breastfeed. The reason is that a mother's milk contains colostrum, which is loaded with antibodies and vitamins that help build the baby's immune system. However, some women prefer not to breastfeed or cannot breastfeed at which time they need to think about buying the best baby formula.

There have been many reports over the years that cow's milk could cause possible problems. For this reason, pediatricians often suggest that parents not use cow's milk, choosing a safe and healthy formula instead.

Any baby under the age of one year should not be on cow's milk. For one thing, the baby could have a problem with being lactose intolerant but cow's milk is not intended for infants of this age. This type of milk does not contain the right levels of carbohydrates, vitamins, and proteins that a growing baby needs.

Now, if you find formula that has cow's milk as the foundation, keep in mind that this is not the same as what you would buy at the grocery store for the rest of the family. Instead, baby formula such as this is prepared in a very specific way with proteins and fats being altered so they are more like that of mother's milk.

Of course, as mentioned some babies are lactose intolerant, which means they cannot handle cow's milk or even formula based on cow's milk.

In this case, formulas made with soy are a great alternative. Soy is healthy and easily tolerated. Lactose intolerant babies cannot digest the enzyme needed to break down lactose, which is sugar in cow's milk. To get past this, simply choose a soy formula, which is not the same as store bought soy milk.

One particular option that has proven helpful for lactose intolerant babies has a protein called hydrolysate. These formulas have the broken down enzyme, which means the baby gets the nutrients needed but without the allergic reaction. Babies who have milk allergies and then fed a formula with this protein have done extremely well.

Along with the different ingredients found in baby formula, there is also the consideration for both convenience and cost.

Baby formula is not cheap, which is why many parents will choose the powdered type, which is the most affordable. Powdered formula is simply mixed with water, either tap or bottled, shaken, and fed.

Another possibility for baby formula is the liquid form. The first option is concentrated formula, which is also mixed with water. This is a convenient and easy solution but because the formula is concentrated, parents need to make sure measurements are accurate. This way, the baby is getting the right level of nutrients but also being fed a formula that can be easily digested.

The other option for liquid formula is ready-to-serve. In this case, the baby formula is already mixed to the exact level of formula and water so all you would do is heat the bottle and serve. Of course, this formula can also be served cold without concern of digestive problems. The only downfall to ready-to-serve baby formula is that it is the most expensive.

As you shop around for formula, we recommend you pay close attention to labels. For instance, you might see some labels stating they are “enhanced”, which means the formula is made with docosahexaenoic acid, or DHA and arachidonic acid or ARA. These ingredients are a type of omega 3 fatty acids that experts say mimic mother’s milk and while deemed safe, some controversy has been raised about their true benefit.

Baby formula on the market today is both nutritious and safe. Even so, there are different preparations so you want to know the right way of mixing the formula. Regardless of the type of formula you purchase, the nipples, bottles, utensils, hands, and virtually anything that is exposed to the formula needs to be sterile.

Simply prepare the baby formula according to the instructions and follow your baby’s lead on when he or she is hungry. Infants will let you know when their tummy needs to be fed so if you try feeding your baby but he or she rejects the bottle, wait about 30 minutes before trying again. Even if your baby drinks only a small amount, put the bottle up and try again later.