

# Bottle Safety and Preparation

As young children (particularly those under 12 months) are still developing their immune system, they are more susceptible to food borne illnesses and infection. This therefore makes it imperative that education and care services implement and maintain the highest level of hygiene practices. Our Service will therefore ensure that safe practices are consistently maintained for handling, storing, preparing and heating breast milk and formula, and sterilising bottles and teats.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

## RELATED POLICIES

Bottled Breast Milk Policy Nutrition and Food Safety Policy	Work Health and Safety Health and Safety
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## PURPOSE

To ensure our Service maintains a safe and hygienic environment for all infants and toddlers requiring a bottle, educators will sterilise and prepare bottles safely and hygienically in accordance with recognised

guidelines and best practice. All educators preparing and/or handling bottles will have undergone training in safe food handling.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to educators, staff, management, and visitors of the Service.

## IMPLEMENTATION

During their first year of life, babies are at their most vulnerable to viruses, bacteria, and parasitic infections, due to their immune system not yet being fully developed. Unsafe or careless food handling practices can therefore lead to anything from a mild attack of thrush to a more serious condition of gastroenteritis, all of which are similar to food poisoning and can cause vomiting and diarrhoea, and subsequent dehydration.

To ensure that bottles are consistently prepared in a safe and hygienic manner Educators will adhere to Service procedures at all times.

### Management will ensure:

- That the Nominated Supervisor and Educators are aware of the procedures for sterilising bottles and teats, and preparing, heating, and storing bottles of formula and breast milk.
- Procedures for the safe sterilisation of bottles and teats are strictly adhered to.
- Procedures for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles are strictly adhered to.
- Infants over 6 months of age are given small amounts of cooled boiled water in addition to breastmilk or formula as required.
- Infants are given only breast milk, formula, or cooled boiled water: They are not given fruit juice in their bottle due to the increase risk of tooth decay.

### A Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person will:

- Ensure that Educators adhere to the procedures for sterilising bottles and teats, and preparing, heating, and storing bottles of formula and breast milk.
- Adhere to the procedure for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles.
- Provide infants over 6 months of age with small amounts of cooled boiled water in addition to breast milk or formula as required.
- Ensure infants are not given fruit juice in their bottle due to the increase risk of tooth decay.
- Ensure families are familiar with their responsibilities in accordance with this policy.

**Educators will:**

- Implement safe food handling practices.
- Store all bottles in an appropriate area for food preparation that complies with the food safety standards for kitchens and food preparation areas.
- Adhere to the procedure for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles.
- Provide infants over 6 months of age with small amounts of cooled boiled water in addition to breast milk or formula.
- Not give Infants fruit juice in their bottle due to risk of tooth decay.
- Ensure families are familiar with their responsibilities in accordance with this policy.

**Families will:**

- Be informed during orientation that children's bottles must be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Label bottles containing breast milk with the date of expression.
- Attempt to bring enough sterilised bottles each day to meet their child's requirements.
- Supply breast milk in multiple small quantities to prevent wastage.
- Bring pre measured amounts of formula in to the Service each day, so that the formula can be prepared as required. Container must be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Provide labelled bottle(s) for use at the service for children having regular cow's milk in their bottles,
- Be encouraged to communicate regularly with educators about children's bottle and feeding requirements.
- Not put fruit juice in children's bottles.

**STERILISING BOTTLES, TEATS, AND DUMMIES**

After sterilising any item for infants, it is important to remember not to touch any part that will go into the baby's mouth with your hands. Generally, all sterilising systems come with tongs for this purpose, which must also be sterilised with the items.

Always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions that come with the sterilising system and ensure that the recommended sterilising times are strictly adhered to.

Prior to using any sterilising system or device or removing items from a steriliser staff will wash their hands. This is the single most effective way of preventing the spread of infection.

### Steam Sterilising

- **Electric steam sterilising** is based on hospital methods and is quick and efficient, taking eight to twelve minutes plus cooling time. Care must be taken that only equipment that is safe to boil is sterilised in this manner. For example, some parts of breast pumps cannot be boiled. Bottles, teats and other items must be placed upside down and must have sufficient room (not touching any other item) to ensure they are fully sterilised.
- **Microwave steamers** take around five to eight minutes to work, plus cooling time. Note that metal utensils cannot be used in microwaves. Where possible leave the lid on the steriliser until it has cooled sufficiently to prevent steam burns. If using a microwave for sterilising, ensure that a purpose designed sterilisation container is being used.

### Boiling

- Most bottle-feeding equipment must be boiled for at least 10 minutes. Ensure the pot you use is large enough for all bottles to be completely submerged and use the pot exclusively for sterilising. Be aware that teats that are frequently boiled become sticky and may need to be replaced more frequently than if using other sterilisation methods.

### Chemical Sterilising

- Chemical sterilisation is achieved using cold water and a non-toxic liquid or tablet that is added to cold water to create a sterilising solution that is highly effective in killing bacteria. It is extremely safe to use and can be applied to the skin or even swallowed with no harmful effects. Educators need to check that there are no air bubbles left in the bottles to ensure complete sterilisation.
- Always read the manufacturer's instructions to ensure the solution is mixed correctly and items are left in the solution for the required amount of time: Generally, they are sterile after half an hour and can be safely left in the solution for up to 24 hours. The solution must be changed daily.
- Avoid leaving sterilised empty bottles out on work surfaces as they will quickly lose their sterility. Ideally, sterilisers have built-in storage facilities and bottles can be removed when required.

*Note: Dishwashers can be used to clean bottles and equipment, but these items must still be sterilised – the dishwasher does not sterilise.*

## Storing Sterilised Bottles

If not using sterilised bottles immediately, care needs to be taken to store them correctly to avoid them coming into contact with bacteria.

- Ensure your hands and the work bench are clean.
- Using sterile tongs, place the teat 'upside-down' in the bottle, and place the sterilised cap and lid on the bottle.
- Store bottles in a clean place away from dust.
- If not used within 24 hours sterilised bottles should be sterilised again before use.

## PREPARING FORMULA – WHEN USING WATER NOT SUPPLIED BY PARENT

### Before preparing formula:

- Ensure your hands and the work bench are clean.
- Boil water and leave to cool for approximately 30 minutes. This will ensure that the water is not too hot (70°C is the best temperature to prepare formula as it will dissolve easily).

## STORING BREASTMILK AND FORMULA

Infants' bottles – with EBM or formula – brought to the Service must be stored and heated correctly to ensure the milk remains safe and suitable for consumption. Incorrect handling methods can result in the milk becoming potentially hazardous.

### Storing Breast Milk

Expressed breast milk (into a clean sterile container) should be date labeled (date of expression) and refrigerated at 4°C or lower at the back of the fridge where it is coldest. Breast milk that will not be used within two days should be frozen. If the baby has begun feeding, any unused breast milk should be discarded. Tips for parents: Breast milk should be transported to childcare in an esky with a freezer brick, and placed immediately in the back of the refrigerator upon arrival.

### Frozen breast milk

Frozen breast milk can be kept for 2 weeks in the freezer compartment of a one door refrigerator, or 3 months in a freezer section of a fridge with separate door.

If some milk has thawed it should be used within 24 hours. Do not refreeze it.

Tips for parents: Breast milk should be transported to childcare in an esky with a freezer brick, and placed immediately in the back of the refrigerator upon arrival (or in the freezer if still frozen and to remain so).

### **Thawing frozen breast milk**

Breast milk can be thawed in the fridge or at room temperature in a warm water bath/bottle warmer. · Breast milk that has been thawed in the fridge but not warmed should be used within 24 hours, and should not be refrozen.

Breast milk that has been thawed outside the fridge in warm water can be used immediately, or stored in the fridge for up to 4 hours.

### **Warming Breast Milk**

Breast milk should NEVER be microwaved. It destroys the immunological properties in the breast milk. · Breast milk should be warmed by standing the bottle in warm water. · Bottle warmers can be used, but they must have a thermostat control. Bottles should only be warmed in this way for less than 10 minutes. · Before giving the child a drink from the bottle: - put the teat/bottle top back on, and invert the bottle at least 10 times - make sure the breast milk is cool to touch - test by placing several drops on the back of the hand.

### **Recommended procedures for storing, thawing and warming of infant formula**

#### **Storing Infant Formula**

Pre-prepared Infant formula should be named and date labelled and stored immediately in the Service at the back part of the fridge where it is coldest (not in the fridge door where it is warmer).

Discard the contents of partially used bottles after 1 hour. Reusing half empty bottles is risky once they have been heated and sucked on. Throw out any unused formula after 24 hours.

Tips for parents: the safest way to transport formula is to take the cooled, boiled water and the powdered formula in separate containers and mix them when needed. When it is necessary to transport prepared formula (or expressed breast milk) it must be icy cold when leaving home and be carried in an insulated pack to keep it cold.

#### **Heating Infant formula**

- Microwaving infant formula is not recommended by the NHMRC for safety reasons, they do not heat the milk evenly and may create hot spots in the milk which could burn the baby's mouth.

- Formula should be warmed by standing the bottle in warm water (not boiling).
- Bottle warmers can be used, but they must have a thermostat control.
- Bottles should only be warmed for less than 10 minutes.

If the centre decides to use a microwave to warm formula (i.e. breast milk should not be microwaved), the following guidelines are recommended to minimise the risk of hot spots and overheating:

- Make sure the bottle is microwave-safe.
- Make sure there is at least 120 mls of formula in the bottle (otherwise it will overheat).
- If pre-prepared, heat only cold formula straight from the refrigerator.
- Always stand the bottle upright.
- Always take off all the teat/bottle top assembly and leave these outside the microwave.
- Do not use microwave ovens with a wattage over 700W.
- For a 120 ml size bottle - use high setting and heat for less than 30 seconds.
- For a 240 ml size bottle - use high setting and heat for less than 45 seconds.
- Before giving the child a drink from the bottle:
- put the teat/bottle top back on, and invert the bottle at least 10 times
- let the bottle sit for 1-2 minutes before testing the temperature, as the formula can keep heating even though the microwave has finished
- make sure formula is cool to touch - test by placing several drops on the back of the hand or wrist.

## Source

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Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). Eat for health: Infant feeding guidelines: Information for health workers.

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Bottle Feeding (Children's Youth and Women's Health Service, 2008)

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*.

NSW Ministry of Health. (2014). Caring for children birth to 5 years: Food, nutrition and learning experiences. <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/heal/Publications/caring-for-children-manual.pdf>

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## REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	May 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	February 2025
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-worded opening statement and purpose.</li> <li>• Combined with <i>Sterilising bottles and teats policy</i>.</li> <li>• Added sections: <i>Storing sterilised bottles</i> and <i>Preparing formula</i>.</li> <li>• Changed heading from <i>Storing bottles</i> to <i>Storing breast milk and formula</i>.</li> <li>• Changed heading from <i>Cold water sterilising</i> to <i>Chemical sterilising</i>.</li> <li>• Additional information added to points.</li> <li>• Rearranged the order of points for better flow</li> <li>• Sources checked for currency.</li> <li>• New sources added.</li> </ul>		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added the 'related policies' list</li> <li>• Included statements regarding handling &amp; storage to further support compliance</li> </ul>		February 2019
October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated the references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard</li> </ul>		February 2018
February 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor terminology changes made.</li> </ul>		February 2018