



Just Breastmilk- Exclusive Breastfeeding

Feeding Recommendations

Kaiser Permanente strongly supports the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), that “breastfeeding should be continued for at least the first year of life and beyond for as long as mutually desired by mother and child.” The AAP also recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life. Exclusive breastfeeding is defined as feeding only breastmilk without supplementation. Exclusive breastfeeding has been shown to provide improved protection against many diseases and to increase the chances of continued breastfeeding for at least the first year of life. The use of supplements in the first days or weeks of a baby's life has an especially negative impact on the mother's ability to exclusively breastfeed her baby.

What is supplementation?

Supplementation is the giving of extra milk either after a breastfeeding or in place of a breastfeeding. There are 2 types of supplements: breastmilk supplement or artificial supplements, including formula, water, and sugar water. The preferred supplement is a mother's own expressed breastmilk. Formula is given if no expressed breastmilk is available. Early introduction of water, sugar water and infant teas are not recommended to give to your healthy newborn baby.

How should I decide if my baby should be supplemented with formula?

If you have questions about whether or not your baby requires supplemental formula or water, talk to your nurse or pediatric provider in the hospital. A healthy baby who is breastfeeding without problems does not usually need to be given formula supplementation. After an initial day or two of sleepiness, most babies will breastfeed 8-12 times in 24 hours. Supplements are recommended if there is a medical indication such as low blood sugars, increased jaundiced, an ill baby or mother. Most medications prescribed by a doctor are safe to take if you are breastfeeding. Always check with your doctor or a Lactation Consultant before taking any medications.

Risks of formula supplementation

Using supplements in the first weeks may decrease your milk production, make your baby less likely to breastfeed well, and increase the risk of early weaning and allergies. Formula fed infants have an increased risk for developing obesity, ear infections, diarrhea, eczema, urinary tract infections, diabetes, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and pneumonia. Mothers who do not breastfeed are at an increased risk for anemia, osteoporosis, breast cancer and ovarian cancer.

To learn more about breastfeeding and/or to enroll in a breastfeeding class, please contact our Diablo Service Area Health Education Centers at 1-866-248-0721.