

## What if I am thinking of formula feeding ?

Most women in Ireland start their babies with mother's milk. Hospital care is aimed at promoting good health for baby and mother so you hear a lot about breastfeeding. **If you are thinking of not breastfeeding, during your pregnancy talk with your midwife or doctor and your family about these points:**

**Does formula feeding make a difference to a baby's health? Yes.** Babies who do *not* breastfeed are at higher risk for many illness. These include chest infections, ear infections, diarrhoea, as well as later obesity and diabetes. This difference in health may be particularly important if a baby is preterm or there is a family history of some health problems.



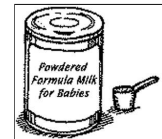
**Does formula feeding make a difference to a mother's health? Yes.** Mothers who do *not* breastfeed are at higher risk of some types of breast cancer, diabetes, depression, high blood pressure and obesity.

**Is formula feeding costly? Yes.** The formula powder will cost about €500 for the first year. Bottles, teats, cleaning and sterilising equipment will be needed. Water must be boiled to make up feeds and hot water is needed for cleaning equipment. If a child is ill more often there will be costs for doctor visits and medicines.



**Is formula feeding safe? It depends.** Powdered formula may be contaminated in the tin which is why the temperature of the water used to make up feeds is so important. Bottles and other equipment needs to be cleaned carefully to reduce the risk of infection. Formula must be prepared carefully so it is not too weak or too strong.

**Is one brand of formula better? No.** Companies may put ingredients in their formula to sound good when marketing the formula. All infant formula sold in Ireland must meet the same EU standards. If any extra ingredient was proved to make an important difference then all brands would be required to include that ingredient. Use a newborn or first formula for a young infant.



**Will I be shown to make up feeds safely? Yes.** On the postnatal ward you will learn about making feeds, how to give feeds and how to care for the equipment.

**Can every mother manage to breastfeed? Yes,** nearly all mothers produce milk after their baby is born. If a mother has any difficulty most of the time this can be solved with help from a person who knows about helping breastfeeding mothers.

**If I am taking medications can I breastfeed? Yes in most cases.** Breastfeeding is ok with most medications and health conditions. Discuss with your doctor or midwife as sometime a medication needs to be changed to one that is better when breastfeeding.

**Can I part breastfeed or use expressed milk? Yes.** You can talk about this with your midwife, nurse, lactation consultant or breastfeeding supporter about doing this.



**If I want to talk about this can I ask someone? Yes.** Your midwife, public health nurse or GP nurse, lactation consultant, doctor and volunteer mother support groups are all happy to talk to you more.

**It is your decision how you feed your baby. The hospital staff will support you in doing what you decide.**

**Be sure that you have the information and understand what it means for you, your baby and your family so that you are comfortable that you made the best decision in your situation.**