

Keeping Your Baby Hydrated

Breast milk is the ideal drink to feed babies at the start of their lives and you can go on feeding them this way for as long as you want. At such a young age, infant formula is the only alternative to breast milk, it is based on cow's milk but enriched with the necessary vitamins and minerals that are needed at this important stage of life. Formula can be fed until 12 months when cow's milk can be given instead. There are other formulas which are made from soya or goat's milk, these are usually given to babies with allergies and it is best to discuss this with your health visitor before making any changes.

Full fat cow's, sheep or goat's milk is not suitable until your baby is one year old as it is not rich enough in iron and other nutrients. Do not give your baby skimmed or semi-skimmed milk.

Once your baby is 12 months the best alternative drink to milk is water, other drinks can fill little tummies up and then dull their appetites for a good balanced and nutritious meal. Once your baby is six months water can be taken straight from the tap, before that always use boiled and cooled water. Take care in using bottled mineral waters as some are naturally high in some minerals such as salt, and carbonated mineral water can damage teeth due to the high content of acid.



Citrus juices are a good source of vitamin C but also high in fructose which is a natural sugar and therefore not good for teeth, if you do give your child fruit juice dilute it with 50 per cent water.

Squashes, fizzy drinks, flavoured milk and so on all contain sugars or artificial sweeteners that encourage a sweet tooth and bad eating habits. Baby and herbal drinks also contain sugars and their use is not recommended. Tea and coffee should not be given to babies.

Really to help your baby develop a good eating pattern once he is seven months or more try to stick to milk or water at meal times and only water between meals, unless your baby is poorly.