

# PROTECT YOUR BABY FROM *CRONOBACTER*

*Cronobacter* is a type of bacteria that can cause rare but serious infections in infants. These bacteria are germs that can live in the environment or in dry foods, such as powdered infant formula. In most cases, it is safe to mix powdered infant formula following the manufacturer's instructions on the container.

**If your baby is younger than 2 months old, was born prematurely, or has a weakened immune system, you may want to take extra precautions to protect them from getting sick with *Cronobacter*:**



Breastfeed if you can. Very few cases of *Cronobacter* infections have been reported among babies fed only breast milk.



Clean, sanitize, and store feeding items safely, such as baby bottles and breast pump parts. This helps prevent contamination with germs and keeps the milk you feed your baby safe.



Clean and sanitize infant feeding items (such as nipples, caps, rings, and valves) and breast pump parts in a dishwasher or a clean wash basin that you use only for washing these supplies. Do not place these items directly in the sink because germs in sinks or drains could contaminate them. Allow items to air-dry thoroughly and store them in a clean, protected area.

**If your baby is fed with formula:**



Use liquid infant formula if possible because it is sterile (without germs) and is less likely to spread *Cronobacter* infection when handled carefully. Powdered formula is not sterile and may contain some germs.



If you use powdered infant formula, prepare and store it safely. Make sure your formula is not expired and the container is in good condition (no dents, puffy ends, or rust spots). Keep lids and scoops clean, and close containers of formula as soon as possible after using.



Keep powdered formula in the container dry to prevent germs from growing. Avoid getting the formula scoop wet. There is no need to wash the scoop unless it becomes wet or dirty (such as falling on the floor). If the scoop needs to be washed, clean it as carefully as you would your baby's bottles. The formula scoop must be completely dry before putting it back into the container.

**If your baby may be at higher risk, consider taking these extra steps to prepare your powdered formula with hot water (at least 158°F/70°C):**



**STEP 1**

Clean work surfaces such as countertops and sinks with soap and water or use a disinfectant wipe or paper towel sprayed with cleaning product.



**STEP 2**

Wash hands with soap and water before preparing infant formula.



**STEP 3**

Boil water and **let it cool for about 5 minutes.**



**STEP 4**

Pour into a clean bottle or feeding cup.



**STEP 5**

Add the exact amount of formula listed on the container.



**STEP 6**

Put a cap on the bottle and shake to mix. Do not stir.



**STEP 7**

Cool the formula to body temperature so it will not burn your baby's mouth. Hold the capped bottle under cool water or place it in an ice bath. Do not let the cooling water get into the bottle or on the nipple.



**STEP 8**

Before feeding your baby, test the formula's temperature by putting a few drops on your wrist. It should feel warm, not hot.

**Using and Storing Prepared Formula**



Use prepared infant formula within 1 hour from the start of feeding and within 2 hours of preparing it.



If your baby does not finish the entire bottle of formula, throw away leftover formula.



If you do not plan to start feeding your baby with the prepared formula right away, put it in the refrigerator immediately. Use formula in the refrigerator within 24 hours.



Throw out formula if you can't remember how long you have kept it in the refrigerator. Do not feed it to your baby.

For more information visit CDC's Cronobacter and [Infants page](#).

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**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention