

Westport Low Water Emergency

Information Sheet 2 - Breastfeeding for Babies aged 0-12months

Babies are at more risk of becoming dehydrated or getting an infection so they need even more special care and attention during the current water shortage. The following advice will help you to feed your baby safely during this emergency.

Breastfeeding remains the best way of feeding your baby, especially if clean water is unavailable. Breast milk is safe and helps your baby fight off infections. Wherever possible, breastfeeding should be continued and supported during this period of water shortage.

If you are breastfeeding

- Keep breastfeeding. Do not start formula feeding and do not wean your baby from the breast in an emergency.
- If you are both breastfeeding and formula feeding, it is best to increase breastfeeding. If possible, only breastfeed your baby and stop formula feeding during the emergency.
- You need plenty of fluids and snacks. Remember: 'Looking after the mum is looking after the baby'. However, even if your diet is compromised, you can still produce good breastmilk for your baby.
- Breastfeeding can help calm you and your baby. **A mum can make enough milk even when stressed** but stress can affect the flow of milk and make babies fuss at the breast. It helps if you feed your baby often. Keep your baby close and have skin-to-skin contact where possible. Try to have some quiet, relaxed time together to help the milk flow.

If you are using expressed breast milk

- You can keep expressed breast milk (fresh or thawed) at room temperature for up to 4 hours. If you are not sure when it thawed, do not use it.
- Keep any frozen breast milk deep in the freezer and only open the freezer when you need to.
- If you are using a breast pump, you must be able to sterilise it. See the hygiene and sterilisation instructions on pages 4 and 5 below to find out how to sterilise feeding equipment including breast pumps in an emergency.
- If you cannot sterilise the breast pump, you can express breast milk by hand.¹

¹ LLL, Hand Expression:

https://www.llli.org/docs/0000000000000001WAB/WAB_Tear_sheet_Toolkit/06_hand_expression.pdf

If you recently stopped breastfeeding

- If you stopped breastfeeding in the last few weeks, you may be able to start making milk again, especially if your baby is under 4 months.
- Hold baby skin to skin, offering the breast as comfort.
- Have short breaks (1–2 hours) between trying to breastfeed your baby.
- Keep using formula until baby is getting enough breast milk.
- Get help from breastfeeding experts such as a lactation consultant or WCPHO Breastfeeding Advocates. You can also access Mum4Mums (breastfeeding peer counsellors).

If you are looking after a baby separated from breastfeeding mum

- Use expressed breast milk that the mother has left in her absence.
- Using another mother's breast milk may be an option for some women, family and whānau. This is preferable to formula.²
- You need to be sure this milk is safe as a very small number of serious infectious diseases can be passed on through breast milk. So can alcohol and recreational drugs
- As a last resort, you can feed the baby with safe formula. Use clean equipment and follow the hygiene and sterilisation instructions on pages 3/4.

If your baby is eating solid foods

- If you are breastfeeding, breastfeed more often so your baby needs less solid food, or only give your baby breast milk.

Tip: Before feeding your baby solids, wash your baby's hands or wipe them with a baby wipe and then wash with hand sanitiser.

- You can use ready-to-eat baby food straight from the jar or pouch. Once you have opened it, give it to your baby straight away and do not keep it for more than 2 hours at room temperature.
- You can prepare food for baby from ingredients you have for the rest of the family. Make sure the texture and consistency of the food is suitable for the age of your baby.
- Do not give your baby food that has passed the best-before date or perishable food (food that can rot or go bad) that has not been chilled.
- If you have thawed foods, use foods that have stayed cold.

² World Health Organization, 2003. Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/42590/1/9241562218.pdf>

- Throw away high-risk foods that have been at room temperature for more than 2 hours. High-risk foods include meat, seafood, egg dishes, made-up baby cereals and rice. Heat food until it is piping hot to kill germs. Babies are at more risk of getting food poisoning than older children and adults.
Remember: 'If in doubt, throw it out.'

If your supplies are low or if you need help

- Listen to your local radio and follow Council/Civil Defence instructions.
- Ask neighbours for help.
- Phone PlunketLine 0800 933 922.
- Phone Healthline 0800 611 116.
- Contact your midwife or local maternity unit if your baby is less than 6 weeks old.
- Contact your Well Child Nurse or Plunket Nurse if your baby is older than 6 weeks.
- Contact or visit your nearest operating Civil Defence Centre if one has been opened

Hygiene and Sterilisation Instructions for Expressed Breastmilk

Step 1: Clean surfaces and wash hands

1. Wet the work surface with clean water, squirt it with dishwashing liquid and rub it with a paper towel.
2. Put a clean paper towel down to work on if the surface is not normally used to prepare food or if it is too rough to clean.
3. Follow the 20/20 rule for hand washing: Wash your hands with warm soapy water for 20 seconds and dry them with a clean paper towel for 20 seconds. If you can't use warm, soapy water, wipe any visible dirt off your hands with a baby wipe and then wash your hands with an alcohol based hand sanitiser.

Step 2: Sterilise bottles, teats and equipment, including breast pumps

1. Wash the bottles with warm, clean, soapy water. Always wash the bottles immediately after using them.
2. Sterilise in hot water or cold water.
 - a. Sterilising with hot water
 - Fill a pot with enough water to cover the items. Put the lid on.
 - Bring the water to the boil. Boil in a rolling boil for 1 minute.
 - Keep the pot covered until you need the items.
 - Use clean tongs to lift the items out of the pot.
 - Keep the pot covered so that you can re-boil the water and use it again the next day.
 - b. Sterilising with cold water and sterilisation tablets
 - In a clean pot, mix water with the right number of sterilisation tablets (for example, two Milton tablets are needed for 4 litres of water).
 - Plunge the bottles, teats and the measuring jug into the solution. Make sure there are no air bubbles.
 - Put the lid on and soak the items for at least 15 minutes. You can keep the items in the solution until you need them.
 - Make a new solution every 24 hours. You can use the old sterilising water for other things such as washing hands or cleaning surfaces.

Tip: If you don't have a suitable bottle, you can try feeding baby expressed breastmilk:

- from a sterilised cup. Let the baby sip, take your time and don't pour the formula down baby's throat. Babies need practice to drink from a cup and some find it difficult
- with a sterilised spoon.

Make sure the cup or spoon is sterilised.

Useful websites

Get Thru website for preparing an emergency kit:

<http://getthru.govt.nz/how-to-get-ready/emergency-survival-items>

How to fill water containers:

<http://getthru.govt.nz/how-to-get-ready/how-to-store-water>

Keeping food safe during emergencies:

www.foodsmart.govt.nz/elibrary/keeping_food_safe.htm

Useful website if you are breastfeeding your baby:

www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/babies-and-toddlers/breastfeeding

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