

Make An Informed Decision About Feeding Your Baby

All individuals and their families have the right to make a fully informed decision about how to feed and care for their babies. The Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit supports all families to feed their babies in a safe and nurturing way by providing reliable information based on facts, and opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns with a Public Health Nurse or Registered Dietician by calling 1-800-660-5853 x2467.

There are a few things you need to know so that you can make an informed decision around infant feeding. The World Health Organization, Canadian Pediatric Society, and the Dieticians of Canada, recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months, and continued breastfeeding with the addition of iron-rich solid foods for up to 2 years and beyond. You have the right to breastfeed your baby anywhere, any time.

****DISCLAIMER** – The Leeds Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit recognizes that not all breastfeeding parents identify as mothers. The terms “mother” and “parent” are used interchangeably in our language. The term “breastfeeding” refers to direct feeding from the breast by a parent of any gender identity or expression. Some parents may identify as “chestfeeding” rather than breastfeeding. The Health Unit respects gender-inclusive language used by parents.

Importance of Breastfeeding

For the mother:

- controls postpartum bleeding
- promotes bone health
- promotes resistance to breast, ovarian, and uterine cancers
- supports the natural health of mom’s body

For the baby:

- supports a healthy digestive system
- promotes normal jaw and tooth development
- promotes healthy brain development
- provides resistance to illness and disease, including food allergies and digestive disease

For the family and community:

- convenient, always the right temperature and is available anytime
- free
- environmentally friendly
- reduces health care costs for the family and society
- assists with natural child spacing

Risks of Not Breastfeeding

For the mother:

- increased risk for postpartum bleeding
- increased risk of type 2 diabetes and certain cancers (breast, ovaries, and uterus)
- brittle bones

For the baby:

- increased risk of various infections (ear, chest, gastrointestinal, diarrhea)
- digestive distress - inflammation of the digestive tract, Crohn’s disease, colitis, diarrhea
- food allergies
- SIDS – sudden infant death syndrome
- childhood illnesses and health problems

Giving infant formula to a breastfed baby can decrease your milk supply. Supplementing with infant formula may lead to stopping breastfeeding before you had planned to stop. It can be hard to restart breastfeeding after stopping. If your plan is to breastfeed, please seek support at our [Infant Feeding Clinic](#).

There are many reasons why some babies may be fed with infant formula. This can be for medical reasons, or for personal reasons. Giving formula may not be your first choice. All families are encouraged to access support with feeding at our Infant Feeding Clinics

Risks and Costs of Formula Feeding:

Average Price of Infant Formula for the First Year of Life Formula costs collected in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties in May 2022			
	Yearly	Monthly	Daily
Powdered**	\$1,166.14	\$97.18	\$3.19
Concentrated**	\$1,713.47	\$142.79	\$4.69
Ready-to-feed**	\$3,439.19	\$286.60	\$9.42

****Basic iron-fortified cow's milk formula**

The price of infant formula is based on how much formula the average healthy baby drinks during the first year of life. All babies are different. Some babies will drink more and others will drink less. The prices above do not include bottles, nipples, and other feeding equipment. These things add to the total cost.

Powdered infant formula can have harmful bacteria that may make your baby sick. It is important that parents follow the directions on the formula package carefully. When there are problems with formula, recalls can be found on the Healthy Canadians website at <https://recalls-rappels.canada.ca/en>.

If you have made an informed choice to feed your baby formula, or your baby requires formula for medical reasons, the **formula feeding resource** titled *Infant Formula: What You Need to Know* will provide accurate and reliable information on feeding formula to your baby in a safe way. You can access this resource on our website or at any of our Health Unit offices.

If you would like more information about breastfeeding supports, please see the **(Community Supports - Breastfeeding)** referral map on our website, or call the Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853.

As a Baby-Friendly designated organization, the Health Unit is committed to supporting all families to feed their babies safely, whether you give breast milk, formula or both.

For more information or if you wish to discuss any questions or concerns with a Public Health Nurse or Registered Dietician, contact the Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853 or visit the Babies and Children section of our website at <http://healthunit.org/health-information/babies-children/>.