

Infant nutrition misconceptions, part four

Bringing a new baby home raises the focus on their and mom's well-being. Toward the top of the list: what and how the child is being fed.

Whether you choose to breastfeed or use formula, misconceptions about infant nutrition are everywhere. Xandra Anderson, a certified lactation consultant at OSF HealthCare, cuts through the noise.

- Breastfeeding takes up more of my time than formula feeding.

Choosing formula over breastfeeding is accepted, Anderson says. But she hears some moms do it for the wrong reason: they think it's quicker, and they can even hand off baby to be fed while they catch up on shut eye.

Anderson counters: Studies have shown that breastfeeding moms get more sleep than formula feeding moms.

"You're getting up, making the bottle and cleaning the bottle. Instead of being out of bed for 15 to 20 minutes [to breastfeed], you're out of bed for 45 to 50 minutes. You try to go back to sleep, and baby is up again," Anderson says.

- Breast milk doesn't keep a baby full.

It's "complete nutrition," Anderson says. Breast milk may be easily digestible, but that's a benefit, not a problem.

- Switching formulas is OK.

Anderson recalls the [2022 formula shortage](#) in the United States, leaving some parents scrambling to find more of the formula that works.

"Switching formulas can actually upset the baby's digestive system," Anderson warns. "All formulas, while safe, are different. Some are lower lactose. Some are dairy free. If we're switching because we're trying to find formula, that can mess up their gut flora, potentially for life."

If you run out of formula, talk to a health care provider about what to do.

- Formula is safer than breastfeeding.

Some formula is ready to drink out of the package. Others need some work. You should follow the formula's sterilization instructions to ensure you're killing any bacteria. The United States Centers for Disease Control And Prevention says [cronobacter infection](#) is one possibility. These are "rare but serious," the CDC says, and could result in death. If your baby becomes sick, take them to a provider right away. Lethargy, fever, excessive crying and poor feeding are common symptoms to watch for.

"If you're breastfeeding, there's not a lot of chances for that cross-contamination," Anderson says. "If you're outside in the garden and messy and sweaty, you can still breastfeed."

Learn more

Read more about how to have a successful pregnancy and following years on the [OSF HealthCare website](#).