



Australian Breastfeeding Association

# Formula feeding in emergencies

The resources you usually rely on to feed your baby formula may be hard to find during an emergency. Packing an evacuation kit with everything you need to make formula feeds will help to protect your baby if you are in a place where there is no clean water, electricity or gas.

## How to prepare for an emergency

Make an emergency plan that includes leaving early and evacuating to a family or friend's home rather than an evacuation centre. It will be much easier to feed your baby if you are in a home with a kitchen.

Pack an emergency evacuation kit that includes water (for making up feeds and washing hands) as well as formula. Include enough feeding bottles or paper cups so you can use a new one for each feed. This will ensure you can feed your baby even if you do not have hot water for washing. If you pack cups, you will also need one bottle for measuring water.

If you want to be prepared to be without electricity for more than a few days, store a gas stove, a full gas bottle and a kettle suitable for use on a gas stove.



The Australian Breastfeeding Association's **evacuation kit list for formula-fed babies** lists everything you need to care for your baby for 3 days.

## What to expect

Water, gas and electricity may be lost during disasters. Stores may be closed, or they may run out of formula, bottled water, or gas.

Not all evacuation centres will have a kitchen. If they do, access may be restricted.

Surfaces may be very dirty or contaminated with sewage, especially after a flood or cyclone.

During the disruption of an emergency, your baby may want more frequent feeds, want to be held more by you, or wake more often overnight. Once the emergency has passed, any changes in your baby's behaviour will reduce on their own as life becomes more normal.

## What to do

- Keep your baby close to you.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. You're doing an important job by looking after your baby.
- Ask emergency responders in an evacuation centre if there is somewhere (not in a toilet) where you can prepare formula and find hot water for washing. If there is no hot water, use the instructions on the next page for making formula feeds in single-use bottles or cups.
- If you have used all your evacuation kit supplies and electricity is still cut, ask emergency responders for help. Let them know that you need formula and a way to heat water for washing to keep your baby safe.
- If you are not able to get the formula that your baby usually drinks, know that all formulas for sale in Australia must meet the same standard. Unless there is an allergy or intolerance, your baby can drink any stage 1 formula. Babies under 6 months should not be fed stage 2 formula.



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### How to make up formula feeds during an emergency

Boiled water should be used for making up formula whenever possible. If you cannot boil water, you can use bottled water instead.

#### Before you begin:

- **Prepare one feed at a time**, just before it is needed.
- **Wash your hands** with water and soap or detergent, or use hand sanitiser.
- **Clean the surface** where you will prepare formula. Wet the surface with water, add detergent and rub with a paper towel. Dry the surface with a new paper towel. If you are worried the surface may be contaminated you can also wipe it with an anti-bacterial wipe. You can use the inside of the lid of your evacuation kit storage container as a preparation surface.

#### To safely prepare formula using single-use bottles or cups:

1. **Measure your water.** Use a feeding bottle to measure the correct amount of bottled water for the feed. The formula tin will tell you how much water and formula powder to use.
2. If you are using disposable cups, **pour the water into a new cup.**
3. **Scoop** the correct amount of formula powder from the tin.
4. **Add the formula powder to the water.** Stir well with a disposable spoon (if using a cup) or shake the bottle until the formula has dissolved.
5. **Feed to your baby.** The Australian Breastfeeding Association's fact sheet on [Cup feeding in emergencies](#) may help.
6. **Throw away any leftover prepared formula** if not used within 2 hours.
7. **Do not reuse bottles or cups** unless they can be properly washed and sterilised.

