

Food and drink for babies/infants who are immunocompromised

These guidelines should be followed throughout treatment, whether at home or in hospital, to minimise the risk of food-related infection.

Important points

- Keep your kitchen clean. Wipe kitchen work surfaces with hot soapy water before preparing food. Remember to keep your cooker, microwave and fridge clean, inside and out.
- Keep pets away from food, dishes and work surfaces.
- Wash hands thoroughly – before preparing food or feeds.
- Check the best before and use by dates on all products. Use well within the recommended period. Seals on jars should be checked. Look to see that the button on the lid of jars is still depressed.
- Ensure tins of baby food or milk are not dented.
- Once opened, packets of dry baby food and rusks should be stored in airtight containers and used within 28 days of opening.
- Opened jars of baby food can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours as long as the content has not previously been heated.
- The contents of opened cans should be emptied into a container, covered and stored in the fridge for up to 24 hours.
- Children receiving chemotherapy should not be given honey due to the potential risk of botulism.

Milk feeds

- Breast milk or infant formula is nutritionally most suitable until one year of age.
- Pasteurised whole cows' milk may be given as a drink from one year of age.
- The ready to feed baby milks available on the ward are suitable.
- Feeds should be made up just before each feed where possible.
- If powdered baby milk is used, make up according to manufacturer's instructions using boiled water no cooler than 70°C, i.e. not left longer than 30 minutes after boiling.
- Bottled water should not be used for making up feeds or drinking.
- Once opened, boxes of infant formula powder should be used within 28 days.
- Feeding equipment should be sterilised until infants are at least six months of age, by steam sterilisation or using chemical sterilising tablets.

Drinks

- Pure unsweetened fruit juice may be given diluted.

Weaning

- Try to encourage finger foods from six months onwards.
- If offering raw fruit and vegetables as finger food, ensure they are well washed and peeled.
- Cook food thoroughly.
- If freezing extra portions, allow them to cool then freeze immediately in individual portion sizes. When you want to use these, remove the portion, thaw and thoroughly re-heat once.

Weaning whilst in hospital

- Pureed foods are available from the catering department.
- Pasteurised yoghurts are suitable for use from four months of age.

If you need more information on the introduction of solids or any other aspect of infant feeding please contact your dietitian.

Drinking water

Rarely there can be outbreaks of a bug called cryptosporidium in water supplies. This causes severe diarrhoea in people receiving chemotherapy. Guidance from the government has suggested that all people who are immunocompromised should only drink water that has been boiled and allowed to cool. Even if you buy bottled water you should still boil and cool it.

- Cooled boiled water should be kept refrigerated and any unused water discarded after 24 hours.
- To avoid having to regularly boil and cool water on the ward, we have a specially fitted filter on the tap. This cannot be purchased for home use.
- You should **not** use home filter jugs.

Please speak to your doctor, nurse or community nurse if you have any questions.