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Dear doctors

### **Formula Milk Feeding in Infants and Young Children**

You may be aware of the recent concern of the public about the shortage of supply of formula milk widely reported in the media. Parents of infants and young children feeding on formula milk may be particularly worried.

The Department of Health (DH) has all along been promoting and educating parents about the healthy feeding of infants and young children. In view of the current situation, we would like to take this opportunity to reinforce the following recommendations on formula milk feeding for parents, from children's nutrition and health perspective:

#### **Children under 1 year:**

##### **They can switch to other brands of formula milk**

- ✧ For 0 to 6-month-old babies – Milk is the sole source of nutrients. Choose Infant Formula (No. “1” Formula) which meets the Codex standards for Infant Formula. Infant formulae are very similar in composition required by the Codex Standards. If parents have difficulty securing the brand currently consumed by the child, they can consider switching to another formula.
- ✧ For 6 to 12-month-old babies – As they have started taking complementary food, they may either take Infant Formula (No. “1” Formula) or switch to Follow-up Formula (No. “2” Formula) of any brand.
- ✧ In general, babies can change directly to another brand of formula milk. The pace will depend on individual babies' acceptance.
- ✧ Use boiled hot water of no less than 70°C (water left in the kettle for no more than 30 minutes after boiling can achieve this temperature) to make up formula milk as this kills harmful bacteria.
- ✧ Cow milk is not suitable for babies under 1 year old.

#### **Children aged 1 year or above:**

##### **They can drink cow milk**

- ✧ For children 1 year or above – Milk is only a part of their balanced diet and a convenient source of calcium. A daily intake of 360 – 480 ml of milk largely satisfies the calcium requirement of young children.
- ✧ Parents can let their child drink cow milk. Switching to Follow-up Formula (No. “3”, “4” Formula) marketed for these children may not be necessary. Besides, cow milk is less expensive than formula milk.

- ❖ For the choice of cow milk, children under two years should take whole milk, those between 2 and 5 years can take low-fat milk and children above 5 years can take skimmed milk.
- ❖ Parents can also give their child other calcium rich foods (e.g. dairy products like yoghurt and cheese, tofu, green leafy vegetables) to meet their calcium needs.

**Expectant Mothers:**

- ❖ Breastmilk is the best natural food for babies. They are encouraged to breastfeed their baby.

To ease public concern, we would like to solicit your assistance in disseminating the above recommendations to your clients and providing them with individualized advice regarding formula milk feeding.

You may wish to access the following links for more information regarding milk feeding in young children:

Centre for Food Safety's website for results of studies on the composition of formula milk:

- ♦ [http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/consumer\\_zone/file/Test\\_Result\\_on\\_Nutritional\\_Composition\\_of\\_14\\_IF\\_e.pdf](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/consumer_zone/file/Test_Result_on_Nutritional_Composition_of_14_IF_e.pdf)
- ♦ [http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/press/files/2012\\_11\\_16\\_app1.pdf](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/press/files/2012_11_16_app1.pdf)
- ♦ [http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/consumer\\_zone/file/Test\\_Result\\_on\\_Nutritional\\_Composition\\_of\\_21\\_IF\\_e\\_28-12-2012.pdf](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/consumer_zone/file/Test_Result_on_Nutritional_Composition_of_21_IF_e_28-12-2012.pdf)

Health information from the Family Health Service (DH)'s website:

- Recommendations on milk intake for young children for health professionals  
<http://www.fhs.gov.hk/english/reports/professionals.html>
- Recommendation to Parents on Milk Feeding for Young Children  
[http://www.fhs.gov.hk/english/adhoc/recommend\\_to\\_parents/milk\\_feeding\\_for\\_children.html](http://www.fhs.gov.hk/english/adhoc/recommend_to_parents/milk_feeding_for_children.html)  
[http://www.fhs.gov.hk/tc\\_chi/adhoc/recommend\\_to\\_parents/milk\\_feeding\\_for\\_children.html](http://www.fhs.gov.hk/tc_chi/adhoc/recommend_to_parents/milk_feeding_for_children.html)
- Switching formula milk  
[http://www.dh.gov.hk/iodine/switching\\_formula\\_eng.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.hk/iodine/switching_formula_eng.pdf)  
[http://www.dh.gov.hk/iodine/switching\\_formula\\_tc.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.hk/iodine/switching_formula_tc.pdf)
- Guide to bottle-feeding  
[http://www.fhs.gov.hk/english/health\\_info/files/n\\_2.pdf](http://www.fhs.gov.hk/english/health_info/files/n_2.pdf)  
[http://www.fhs.gov.hk/tc\\_chi/health\\_info/files/n\\_2.pdf](http://www.fhs.gov.hk/tc_chi/health_info/files/n_2.pdf)
- Healthy eating for infants and young children – Milk Feeding  
[http://www.fhs.gov.hk/english/health\\_info/files/n\\_11.pdf](http://www.fhs.gov.hk/english/health_info/files/n_11.pdf)
- Leaflets on Breastfeeding  
[http://www.fhs.gov.hk/tc\\_chi/health\\_info/files/b12.pdf](http://www.fhs.gov.hk/tc_chi/health_info/files/b12.pdf)  
[http://www.fhs.gov.hk/english/health\\_info/class\\_life/child/child\\_bfm\\_breastfeeding.html](http://www.fhs.gov.hk/english/health_info/class_life/child/child_bfm_breastfeeding.html)

Yours faithfully,

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