

# How to sterilise feeding equipment

## Maternity

**It's important to sterilise all your baby's feeding equipment, including bottles and teats, until they are at least 12 months old.**

This will reduce the risk of your baby developing infections, in particular diarrhoea and vomiting.

Before sterilising, you need to:

- Clean bottles, teats and other feeding equipment in hot soapy water as soon as possible after feeds to avoid milk drying onto the equipment.
- Separate the equipment into its separate parts before washing.
- Wash in a washing up bowl and submerge the equipment in the hot soapy water when washing up.
- Use a clean bottle brush to clean bottles (only use this brush for cleaning bottles), and a small teat brush to clean the inside of teats. Some teats can be turned inside out to clean them but this can cause damage so follow the manufacturer's advice. Do not use salt to clean teats, as this can be dangerous for your baby.
- You can put your baby's feeding equipment in the dishwasher to clean it if you prefer. Putting feeding equipment through the dishwasher will clean it but it does not sterilise it. Make sure bottles, lids and teats are facing downwards. You may prefer to wash teats separately by hand to make sure they are completely clean.
- Rinse all your equipment in clean, cold running water to remove soapy residue before sterilising.
- Remember to sterilise your equipment after washing in the dishwasher.



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The advice above applies to all your baby's feeding equipment, and whether you are feeding expressed breast milk or formula milk.

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### How to sterilise baby feeding equipment

There are several ways you can sterilise your baby's feeding equipment. These include:

- cold water sterilising solution
- steam sterilising
- boiling

#### Cold water sterilising solution

- Solutions may be made up with special sterilising liquid or tablets.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Leave feeding equipment in the sterilising solution for at least 30 minutes.
- Change the sterilising solution every 24 hours.
- Make sure there are no air bubbles trapped in the bottles or teats when putting them in the sterilising solution.
- Your steriliser should have a floating cover or a plunger to keep all the equipment under the solution.

#### Steam sterilising (electric steriliser or microwave)

- Beware of hot steam
- It's important to follow the manufacturer's instructions, as there are several different types of sterilisers.
- Make sure the openings of the bottles and teats are facing downwards in the steriliser.
- Manufacturers will give guidelines on how long you can leave equipment in the steriliser before it needs to be sterilised again.



#### Sterilising by boiling

- Beware of boiling water and hot steam. Make sure the pan and handle are kept well out of the way of children.
- Make sure the items you want to sterilise in this way are safe to boil.
- Boil the feeding equipment in a large pan of water for at least 10 minutes, making sure it all stays under the surface.
- Set a timer so you do not forget to turn the heat off.
- Remember that teats tend to get damaged faster with this method. Regularly check that teats and bottles are not torn, cracked or damaged.



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### After you've finished sterilising

- It's best to leave bottles and teats in the steriliser until you need them.
- If you do take them out, put the teats and lids on the bottles straightaway.
- Wash and dry your hands before handling sterilised equipment. Better still, use some sterile tongs.
- Assemble the bottles on a clean, disinfected surface or the upturned lid of the steriliser.

Information adapted from, National Health Service (2019) Sterilising baby bottles. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/sterilising-bottles/> (Accessed 14 December 2020)

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