



# SAY NO TO CEREAL IN THE BOTTLE

Adding cereal to baby's bottle, even small amounts, can cause short- and long-term problems. Learn more about the reasons why adding cereal in your baby's bottle is not recommended.

## Why Cereal in the Bottle is Unsafe:

- It is a choking hazard. Cereal thickens the consistency of milk, making it harder for your baby to swallow and breathe during a feeding.
- Increases risk of developing a food allergy. Giving solid foods too early can cause allergies because baby's immune system is immature.
- Causes digestive issues. Baby's digestive system is not developed enough to handle solid foods before 4 months of age. Digestion can be difficult and can cause constipation or other bowel movement issues.
- It causes overfeeding. Cereal in a bottle adds extra calories to milk. Overtime extra calories can lead to childhood obesity.

*"But I heard putting cereal in the bottle will help my baby sleep better at night?"*

- Not backed by evidence. Research shows no difference in hours of sleep of a baby fed a bottle of milk vs. a bottle of milk with cereal in it.

## When to Introduce Cereal:

- When your baby is developmentally ready you can introduce solid foods, including infant cereal.
- Baby is considered developmentally ready when they can sit up with little to no support, grasp smaller objects, and bring items to their mouth. This typically occurs between 4-6 months.
- Cereals should be iron fortified because it decreases the risk of your baby having iron deficiency or anemia. Iron is important for your baby's learning and development.

## How to Introduce Cereal:

- Offer cereal on a spoon. Allow baby to feed themselves with the spoon. Self-feeding promotes normal eating skills and oral development.
- When baby practices the spoon-to-mouth motion, its brain is learning and creating memory of the action that helps develop feeding skills.
- It's okay if your baby wants to eat the cereal with their hands. This will promote fine motor skills.