

## Emergency Food For Babies

Infants and very small children would be the first victims of starvation during and after a pandemic, unless special preparations are made on their behalf. They need foods that are more concentrated and less rough. Most American mothers do not nurse their infants, and if a family's supply of baby foods were exhausted the parents might experience the agony of seeing their baby slowly starve. Under unsanitary conditions, it is safer to make a formula 3 times a day. To do so, add 1/3 cup plus 2 teaspoons (a little less than one ounce) of instant nonfat milk powder to 1-1/3 cups (2/3 pint) of boiled water, and stir thoroughly. Then add 1 tablespoon (about 1/3 ounce, or 9 grams) of vegetable oil and 2 teaspoons of sugar, and stir. (If regular bakers' milk powder is used, 1/4 cup is enough when making one-third of the daily formula, 3 times a day.) If baby bottles are not at hand, milk can be spoon-fed to an infant.

During a crisis, the best and most dependable food for an infant is mother's milk provided the mother is assured an adequate diet. The possibility of disaster is one more reason why a mother should nurse her baby for a full year. Storing additional high-protein foods and fats for a nursing mother usually will be better insurance against her infant getting sick or starving than keeping adequate stocks of baby foods and the equipment necessary for sanitary feeding after evacuation or an attack.

To give a daily vitamin supplement to a baby, a multivitamin pill should be crushed to a fine powder between two spoons and dissolved in a small amount of fluid, so that the baby can easily swallow it. If an infant does not receive adequate amounts of vitamins A, D, and C, he will develop deficiency symptoms in 1 to 3 months, depending on the amounts stored in his body. Vitamin C deficiency, the first to appear, can be prevented by giving an infant 15 mg of vitamin C each day (about 1/3 of a 50-mg vitamin C tablet, pulverized) or customary foods containing vitamin C, such as orange juice.

Lacking these sources, the juice squeezed from sprouted grains or legumes can be used. If no vitamin pills or foods rich in vitamin D are available, exposure of the baby's skin to sunlight will cause his body to produce vitamin D. If sufficient milk is not obtainable, even infants younger than six months should be given solid food. Solid foods for babies must be pureed to a fine texture. Using a modern baby food grinder makes pureeing quick and easy work. Under crisis conditions, a grinder should be cleaned and disinfected like other baby-feeding utensils, as described later in this section. Several expedient methods are available: the food can be pressed through a sieve, mashed with a fork or spoon, or squeezed through a porous cloth. Good sanitation must be maintained; all foods should be brought to a boil after pureeing to insure that the food is safe from bacteria.

A pureed solid baby food can be made by first boiling together 3 parts of a cereal grain and 1 part of beans until they are soft. Then the mixture should be pressed through a sieve. The sieve catches the tough hulls from the grain kernels and the skins from the beans. The grain-beans combination will provide needed calories and a well-supplemented protein. The beans also supply the additional iron that a baby needs by the time he is 6 months old. Flours made from whole grains or beans, as previously described, also can be used; however, these may contain more rough material. Some grains are preferable to others. It is easier to sieve cooked corn kernels than cooked wheat kernels. Since wheat is the grain most likely to cause allergies, it should not be fed to an infant until he is 6 to 7 months old if other grains, such as rice or corn, are available. Small children also need more protein than can be supplied by grains alone.

As a substitute for milk, some bean food should be provided at every meal. If the available diet is deficient in a concentrated energy source such as fat or sugar, a child's feedings should be increased to 4 or 5 times a day, to enable him to assimilate more. Whenever possible, a small child should have a daily diet that contains at least one ounce of fat (3 tablespoons, without scraping the spoon). This would provide more than 10% of a young child's calories in the form of fat, which would be beneficial.

If under emergency conditions it is not practical to boil infant feeding utensils, they can be sterilized with a bleach solution. Add one teaspoon of ordinary household bleach to a quart of water. (Ordinary household bleach contains 5.25% sodium hypochlorite as its only active ingredient and supplies approximately 5% available chlorine. If the strength of the bleach is unknown, add 3 teaspoons per quart.) Directions for safe feeding without boiling follow:

## Utensils

1. Immediately after feeding, wash the inside and outside of all utensils used to prepare the formula and to feed the infant.
2. Fill a covered container with clean, cold water and add the appropriate amount of chlorine bleach.
3. Totally immerse all utensils until the next feeding (3 or 4 hours). Be sure that the bottle, if used, is filled with bleach solution. Keep container covered.

At feeding time: Wash hands before preparing food. Remove utensils from the disinfectant chlorine solution and drain, but do not rinse or dry. Prepare formula; feed the baby. Immediately after feeding: Wash utensils in clean water and immerse again in the disinfectant solution. Prepare fresh chlorine solution each day.