

# Nutrition Labelling of Follow-up Formula

Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling)  
(Amendment)(No. 2) Regulation 2014

## 營養資料 Nutrition Information

	單位 / Unit	每100毫升沖調好的配方產品 / Per 100mL of prepared formula
能量 / Energy	千卡 / kcal	68
蛋白質 / Protein	克 / g	2.5
可消化碳水化合物 / Digestible carbohydrates	克 / g	3.1
	克 / g	7.4
	微克視黃醇當量 / μg RE	78
	微克 / μg	1.1
	微克 α-生育酚當量 / μg α-TE	0.8
	微克 / μg	5.0
	微克 / μg	80
核黃素 / Riboflavin	微克 / μg	170
煙酸 / Niacin	微克 / μg	477
維他命B6 / Vitamin B6	微克 / μg	45
維他命B12 / Vitamin B12	微克 / μg	0.3
泛酸 / Pantothenic acid	微克 / μg	350
葉酸 / Folic acid	微克 / μg	10
維他命C / Vitamin C	毫克 / mg	10
生物素 / Biotin	微克 / μg	4.0
<b>礦物質 / Minerals</b>		
鐵 / Iron	毫克 / mg	0.9
鈣 / Calcium	毫克 / mg	80
磷 / Phosphorus	毫克 / mg	50
鎂 / Magnesium	毫克 / mg	8.0
鈉 / Sodium	毫克 / mg	24
氯化物 / Chloride	毫克 / mg	52
鉀 / Potassium	毫克 / mg	85
碘 / Iodine	微克 / μg	16
鋅 / Zinc	毫克 / mg	0.6

For infants and  
young children of  
any age from 6 months  
to under 36 months



食物環境衛生署  
Food and Environmental  
Hygiene Department



食物安全中心  
Centre for food safety

# Nutrition Labelling of Follow-up Formula

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Breastfeeding is unquestionably the best choice of diet for infants, in which breastmilk contains natural antibodies that enhances babies' immunity and offers comprehensive nutrients that foster growth. During the first few months of life, breastmilk alone provides adequate nutrition to meet the requirement of babies. Babies approaching 6 months old start going through a developmental transition from a milk-only diet to an adult diet with varieties. Various nutritious complementary foods are introduced to their diet, while breastfeeding can be continued until the child is 2 years old or older.

Infants' and young children's complementary food sources are more diverse. The complementary food products targeting to infants and young children, though not necessary to them only, may provide variable amount of different nutrients. Caregivers can make their choice by referring to the nutrition label of follow-up formula, i.e. "Energy + 25 nutrients" ("1+25"), available starting from 13 June 2016.

### Composition of Follow-up Formula

While the nutritional composition of follow-up formula mimics that of breastmilk or infant formula, certain nutrients in breastmilk are more easily absorbed than those of formula. Furthermore, the nutritional content of breastmilk changes as the baby grows. Caregivers should note that changing to follow-up formula is not a must and it should only be given to babies over 6 months old.

In general, the components of follow-up formula are similar to that of infant formula.

# Energy and Components of Follow-up Formula

## Energy

- Fuel for infants and young children.
- It comes from carbohydrates, fat and protein, with carbohydrates being the primary source of energy.

## Protein

- Protein is required for maintaining and repairing body tissues as well as producing hormones, antibodies and enzymes.
- It may be sourced from cows milk protein or soy protein.

## Fat

- It provides essential fatty acids for normal brain and eye development and absorption of the fat-soluble vitamins.
- Fat stored in the body also reduces body heat loss and protects body organs.

## Carbohydrates

- Getting sufficient carbohydrate intake enables normal and efficient use of dietary fat and protein in the body for other essential functions such as building new tissues.

## Vitamins and Minerals

(e.g. vitamin A, calcium, iron )

- Micronutrients are needed in small amounts but are essential for growth, development and normal body function.
- During infancy and early childhood, the requirement for micronutrients is high.

No nutritional composition requirement has been established for follow-up formula, as infants and young children who have begun complementary feeding are no longer solely dependent on formula products or other complementary food products. However, caregivers can read the nutrition label to make an informed choice.

## Labels Parents See

The nutrition labelling requirements (i.e. "1+25") are established in accordance with international practices. For follow-up formula, the nutrition label is relatively more concise in comparison to that of infant formula as the target population is getting more diversified diet.

Items on the nutrition label	"1+25" Label
Energy	✓
Protein	✓
Total fat	✓
Available carbohydrates	✓
Minerals	9 types
Vitamins	13 types

## More is Better?

When mothers choose formula products over breastfeeding for various reasons, they should be aware that too much of some nutrients in these products is as harmful as not enough. For example, excessive sodium intake may lead to dehydration as a result of high blood sodium levels, a tendency to prefer salty food and elevated blood pressure in the long run. Hence, read the nutrition label to make a better choice.

## Taurine, Nucleotides, DHA... What else?

On top of nutrients generally included, manufacturers often add other substances to formula products, claiming that they bring additional nutritional benefit on various aspects. In fact, these are not essential nutrients in the products. (See below)

### Taurine

Taurine is a major constituent of bile salts and is abundant in foetal and neonatal human brain. It plays an important role in the absorption of fat and fat soluble vitamins and maintenance of normal liver functions. Although taurine is commonly added to formula products because of the anticipated benefits on visual, auditory and intestinal development of infants, relevant evidence from human studies is lacking. The Codex considers mandatory addition of taurine is not necessary in formula products. Taurine is available from human breastmilk, and also in seafood and meat.

### Nucleotides

Nucleotides are core structural units of DNA and RNA. They are involved in protein synthesis and metabolic regulatory processes. Nucleotides are added to formula products to mimic breastmilk with the anticipated benefits of enhancing immune functions and promoting growth of infants. However, evidences of beneficial effects from nucleotide supplementation of infant formulae are not conclusive. The Codex does not require the addition of nucleotides in formula products. In fact, nucleotides could be produced in the human body and are widely available in foods.

## Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)

DHA is a long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acid which has a critical role in normal retinal and brain development of foetus in the first two years of life. DHA presents in varying amounts in human breastmilk, fish oils, and marine algae. Apart from its dietary sources, the body can produce DHA from  $\alpha$ -linolenic acid, which is found in plant oils as well as breastmilk and infant formula.

Some formula manufacturers add DHA-containing ingredients in their formula products. This is mainly to mimic the composition of breastmilk (mean DHA content ranges from 0.2-1.0% of fatty acids), and to take into consideration the typically higher blood level of DHA in breastfed infants than that in infants fed with formulae not containing DHA. However, when coming to the question about the actual benefit of adding DHA to formula products, the issue is still controversial.

In fact, there are concerns that for nutrients added to formula products, including DHA, their structures and functions may not be the same as those present in breastmilk as they are extracted from cows milk or other ingredients (such as marine oils in the case of DHA). Therefore, taking into account that DHA could be synthesised in the body from  $\alpha$ -linolenic acid, the Codex does not consider DHA to be an essential composition of infant formula and follow-up formula products. In view of the possible benefits to certain babies, addition of DHA is generally acceptable.

## Should I Give My Child Products With Added Substances?

There is no international consensus that formula products with additional substances provide added benefits to infants and children. For older infants and young children who have started weaning, maintaining a balanced diet and consuming a variety of foods are crucial to obtaining different types of nutrients to support their growth and development.

## Exemption for Some Follow-up Formula Products

Formula for special medical purposes for infants and young children marked or labelled with required information is exempted from the requirements of nutritional composition and nutritional labelling as formulation of these products is varied to fit different medical purposes arising from diseases, disorders or medical conditions.

In addition, follow-up formula packed in a container which has a total surface area of less than 250cm<sup>2</sup> is exempted from the nutrition labelling requirements.

## Further Information

For details, please refer to the website for more information on the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulation 2014:

[http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/food\\_leg/food\\_leg\\_Formula\\_Products\\_for\\_Infants.html](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/food_leg/food_leg_Formula_Products_for_Infants.html)