

# Water

Exclusively breastfed babies **do not need** additional water – breastmilk is 88% water and supplies all the fluids that your baby needs. Even in the first few days after birth, before mom’s milk has “come in”, colostrum is all that is needed to keep baby well hydrated (assuming baby is nursing effectively).

Exclusively breastfed babies do not require additional water **even when it is very hot outside**, as long as baby is allowed to nurse as needed. Even in extremely hot, dry weather your baby can get all the liquids needed via breastmilk. Formula fed babies also do not routinely need extra water.

Per the American Academy of Pediatrics, “Supplements (water, glucose water, formula, and other fluids) should not be given to breastfeeding newborn infants unless ordered by a physician when a medical indication exists... During the first 6 months of age, even in hot climates, water and juice are unnecessary for breastfed infants and may introduce contaminants or allergens.”

For newborns (especially under 4-5 weeks), water supplements can be risky

- Babies under two months should not be given supplemental water.
- Water supplements are associated with increased bilirubin levels (jaundice), excess weight loss, and longer hospital stays for newborns.
- Too much water can lead to a serious condition called oral water intoxication.
- Water supplements fill baby up without adding calories, so water supplements can result in weight loss (or insufficient weight gain) for the baby.
- Babies who get water supplements are less interested in nursing. If baby is not nursing as often as he should, it will take longer for mom’s milk to come in and can delay or prevent mom from establishing an optimum milk supply.

## For babies past the newborn stage

- Too much water can interfere with breastfeeding because it fills baby up so that he nurses less. Babies need the nutrition and calories in breastmilk to grow – water has none of these.
- Breastmilk has all the water your baby needs, even in very hot weather.
- Once baby starts solids, you might want to give him a few sips of expressed milk or water with his solids (no more than 2 ounces per 24 hours)
- For older babies & toddlers, continue to breastfeed and offer water in moderation.

(Adapted Reference: [kellymom.com](http://kellymom.com))