

Should you worry about **PALM OIL IN BABY FORMULA?**

What is palm oil and why is it added to some baby formulas?

- Palm oil is a type of fat produced from the fruit of the oil palm tree
- All baby formulas contain vegetable oils to mimic the fats in breast milk.
- Breast milk contains a variety of fatty acids, with the most prevalent being oleic acid (monounsaturated fat) and palmitic acid (saturated fat)- palm oil is high in both of these.

Why is palm oil controversial?

- Palm oil is a major contributor to deforestation, impacting the habitats of some critically endangered species
- Palm oil in formula can contribute to constipation in some children
- There is some evidence that suggests babies fed baby formula that contains palm oil or palm olein **absorb less fat and calcium** from the formula overall and excrete more of these nutrients in the stools.

Although this may sound quite alarming, there is no proof that babies aren't getting enough calcium from formula containing palm oil to support healthy growth. In fact, formula-fed babies aren't expected to absorb ALL of the calcium in formula.

Compared with breast milk, the nutrients in formula are less bioavailable so they are provided in excess. There is more calcium than needed in formula, so some can be wasted and not affect your baby's growth and development. The same is true when you consider the amount of fatty acids absorbed from formula - even if some is lost, there is still more than enough to be considered healthy.

Palm Oil and Constipation

Studies show that babies tend to be prone to harder stools when they are fed with a formula that contains palm oil or palm olein. This happens as a result of having to pass the solidified calcium-fatty-acid complexes (calcium soaps).

Some babies might still do well with a palm-oil-based baby formula, but if your baby is prone to constipation (or they are already on a formula containing palm oil and experiencing otherwise unexplained constipation) you may want to consider a different option with an alternative fat blend.

The Bottom Line:

Baby formulas are highly regulated and palm oil is ultimately safe for babies. Environmental concerns aside, as long as your baby is thriving, gaining weight, and reaching all the milestones, you shouldn't worry about palm oil in your baby's formula.

If your baby is prone to constipation, trying a different formula could be an option- but make sure you switch gradually to give their tiny tummy time to adjust

