Breast milk fortifier (BMF) explained

Information for parents

Introduction

This leaflet explains what breast milk fortifier (BMF) is and why we recommend it for your baby. Please feel free to ask us any questions you have about the information below.

Why is BMF needed?

Your breast milk is the best feed for your baby. However, preterm (premature) babies have higher nutritional requirements than term babies. BMF helps provide this extra nutrition when they are being fed breast milk. Eating or drinking particular foods will not increase the nutritional content of your breast milk.

When is BMF given?

In the early weeks your breast milk provides most of the nourishment your baby needs, particularly protein which supports your baby’s growth. Over two to three weeks the amount of protein in your breast milk naturally decreases. This means that we then need to help the milk provide enough protein to meet your baby’s needs, so the team looking after your baby will discuss the addition of BMF.

What is in BMF?

The main ingredient is protein but it also contains vitamins, minerals and trace elements which mean other nutritional supplements can sometimes be stopped. The protein in BMF originally comes from cow’s milk but has been broken down so it is easier for your baby to digest and is less likely to cause intolerance.

How is BMF given?

BMF is introduced gradually by giving it half strength at first and going to full strength after a day or two, once we are sure your baby is tolerating it. In most cases, BMF continues until baby is fully breast fed but sometimes carries on for a short time after discharge. The team looking after your baby will assess when BMF can be stopped.
Are there any side effects?
You may notice that your baby’s bowel habit changes, with stools looking slightly thicker.

Need more information?
If you have any questions about BMF please let your baby’s nurse know and a doctor or dietitian will arrange to meet with you.

How do I make a comment about my visit?
We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any suggestions or comments about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on 020 3313 0088 (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte’s & Chelsea hospitals), or 020 3312 7777 (St Mary’s and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at pals@imperial.nhs.uk. The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to express your concerns in writing to:

Complaints department
Fourth floor
Salton House
St Mary’s Hospital
Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Alternative formats
This leaflet can be provided on request in large print, as a sound recording, in Braille, or in alternative languages. Please contact the communications team on 020 3312 5592.

We have a free and premium wi-fi service at each of our five hospitals. For further information please visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk