Importance of Following Instructions for Infant Formulas

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before preparing formula.
- Follow the health care provider's instructions for mixing formula. (Occasionally, a premature infant needs extra calories and the mother may have been told to prepare the formula in a way that will provide these extra calories).
- If your health care provider does not provide instructions, follow the formula manufacturer’s directions for preparing and diluting formula. The manufacturers’ instructions are printed on the formula can label.
- Be sure to use the scoop that comes with your brand of powdered formula.
- Do not use a scoop that is included with any other type of formula.
- Once prepared, infant formula can spoil quickly. Either immediately feed the baby or immediately cover the bottle and refrigerate at 35-40°F (2-4°C) for no longer than 24 hours.
- Do not use prepared formula that has been at room temperature for a total of more than 2 hours.
- Do not freeze prepared formula.
- After feeding begins, do not refrigerate feeding bottle. You must use within 1 hour of mixing the formula or discard.
- Store cans of powdered formula at room temperature.
- After opening can, keep it tightly covered, store in a dry area, and use contents within 1 month.
- Do not freeze powder, and avoid excessive heat.
- Use unopened formula by expiration date on bottom of can.

Improper Dilution of Infant Formulas

If you do not prepare infant formula properly, it may cause the following problems:

- Incorrect mixing of formula can make your baby sick and/or it might keep your baby from growing properly.
- If you use too much water when mixing the formula, your baby will not get all the nutrients needed to grow. The baby will also get too much water for her/his small body.
- If you use too much liquid or powder formula in the bottle, it could hurt the baby's kidneys and/or brain.

Drinking too much water can lead to a condition known as water intoxication. A baby can get water intoxication by drinking infant formula that has been diluted with too much water. This condition occurs most often in infants under 6 months of age. Please talk to your WIC Nutritionist if you have questions.

References
1. Infant Nutrition and Feeding: A Guide for Use in WIC and CSF programs
2. Instructions for Preparation, Storage, and Use
   http://www.meadjohnson.com/
3. Improper Dilution of Formula (AK 49-USDA 415)
   http://www.hss.state.ak.us/