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Infant Formula

Since most folks interested in preparedness of one sort or another are planning for families, real or as yet hypothetical, I thought it important to include something on infant formula. Most baby food that comes in jars can be treated like canned goods of types meant for adults. Formula, though, is something else. I have to admit, that not yet having kids of my own, I've not given this much thought before so the below is taken from the book KEEPING FOOD FRESH, by Janet Bailey (see book list). In the future, if some of you readers will send it to me and/or I come up with more information from my own researches I want to expand this section on infant/child food storage.

Prepared infant formula is primarily water and nonfat cow's milk. Among other ingredients, it contains sweeteners; sometimes lactose which is milk sugar; and sometimes corn syrup or other sugars. Coconut and soybean oils are common; vitamin and mineral supplements are universal. A few brands contain mono- and diglycerides, chemicals that keep the liquid from separating.

Buying and Storing Infant Formula

Canned liquid infant formula comes either ready to eat or in a concentrate to be diluted with water. Cans and packing cases are clearly marked with a "use by" date.

Unopened cans stored in a cool, dry place keep well from twelve to eighteen months (longer than the baby is an infant).

After the can is opened, measure out the amount of formula you need, cover the can and store in the refrigerator. It will keep no more than 48 hrs at 40 deg F. Never return leftover formula from the bottle to the storage container and do not store half used bottles.

You can pre-measure the whole can-full into sterilized baby bottles, seal them, and store them in the refrigerator, but forty eight hours is still the limit. To keep full bottles from tipping over in the refrigerator, slip them into a carton from a six-pack of soda pop bottles.

In examining the offerings at my local grocer I see that infant formula is also offered as a dry powder to be mixed by the parent. I could not come to a ready idea of how long the formula powder might be good on the shelf since it seemed to vary radically depending on exact type and manufacturer. The shortest use-by date was only a year, but some had use-by dates three years into the future. Clearly, this is an area that is going to need much investigation. I hope some of our knowledgeable readers out there will be able to help out.

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