The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends that parents consult with their infant’s health care provider regarding feeding water to an infant. However, there are general recommendations on feeding water to healthy infants, depending on whether an infant is formula-fed or exclusively breast-fed, and whether solid foods are being fed. It is generally recommended that:

- Formula-fed infants in a normal climate not be fed additional water beyond what is in properly diluted formula;
- Partially breast-fed and formula-fed infants, spending time in a hot climate, be fed some water (about 4 to 8 ounces per day, unless otherwise indicated by a health care provider); and
- Breast-fed and formula-fed infants, in a normal climate who are being fed a variety of solid foods, especially high protein foods (e.g., meats, egg yolks), be fed some water (a total of about 4 to 8 ounces per day, unless otherwise indicated by a health care provider).

It is recommended that exclusively breast-fed infants in hot humid climates, not be fed additional water besides what is in breastmilk. However, if in doubt, parents should consult with their infant’s health care provider. (Child care providers should get parents approval before feeding water to an infant.) If water is fed, it is generally recommended that it be sterile water. This reduces the risk of feeding contaminated water.

Most fruit juices are diluted liquids. They should not be fed in excessive amounts to infants and should be fed only using a cup. No more than 4 ounces of fruit juice is recommended per day for infants from 6 through 11 months of age. Parents should consult with their infant’s health care provider regarding the total amount of fruit juice and water to feed an infant per day. Plain water and fruit juice are meant to be fed in relatively small amounts to older infants as a source of fluid which supplements a nutritionally balanced diet. Feeding an excessive amount of water, juice or other diluted liquid places an infant at risk of a potentially dangerous medical condition called water intoxication.