

***Cronobacter* Disease Fact Sheet**

***Cronobacter sakazakii* (*Cronobacter*) is a bacterium that can cause rare but serious infections.**

Cronobacter causes serious infection especially in infants under 2 months old, infants born prematurely, people over 65 years old and people with weakened immune systems. *Cronobacter* can cause meningitis (swelling of the lining around the brain and spinal cord) and sepsis (infection in the bloodstream), particularly in infants under 2 months old. In people of all ages, *Cronobacter* can infect cuts, scrapes, wounds, or places where people have had surgery. It can also cause urinary tract infections. In high risk people, these infections may lead to death.

***Cronobacter* is found naturally in the environment and can survive in many places.**

Cronobacter survives particularly well in dry foods like powdered infant formula, powdered milk, herbal teas, and starches. *Cronobacter* has also been found in infant feeding parts like breast pumps. It is unknown if *Cronobacter* infection can be spread from one person to another, but other types of bacteria spread this way, especially in hospitals, if people do not wash their hands well.

Symptoms to look for:

Infants:

- Fever
- Poor feeding
- Excessive crying
- Very low energy
- Grunting breaths

Infants who develop meningitis might have seizures, high fever, stiffness in the body and neck, constant crying, and excessive sleepiness or irritability.

See a doctor immediately for treatment.

People who think they, or their child, may have an infection due to *Cronobacter* should seek medical care immediately. Doctors may take samples of blood and/ or cerebrospinal fluid (the fluid surrounding the brain and spine) to confirm an infection. Treatment with certain antibiotics is recommended and should not be delayed. Your doctor will decide which medicine is best in your situation.

Extra precautions can be taken to help prevent *Cronobacter* infection.

To help prevent *Cronobacter* infection, parents can clean and sanitize feeding items like breast pumps, bottles, and nipples. More information on cleaning and sanitizing can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/cronobacter/resources.html>. Breastfeed if you can. Ready-made formula, which is sterile (without germs), is another option.

If using powdered infant formula, store it safely and ensure the container is in good condition (ie. no dents or rust). Before preparing the formula, wash your hands well with soap and water. Keep the formula scoop clean and dry and close the container as soon as possible after using. Use prepared formula within 1 hour of beginning feeding and within 2 hours of preparation. Prepared bottles of formula can be stored in a refrigerator for up to 24 hours. Throw away leftover formula or any formula if you cannot remember when you prepared it.