

Powdered infant formula is not a sterile product and it has been shown to be a common vehicle for the transmission of pathogens to a specific group of infants, particularly *Enterobacter sakazakii* and *Salmonella* which are implicated in several outbreaks causing meningitis, necrotizing enterocolitis, sepsis and salmonellosis, with a mortality rate around 20%. The International Commission on Microbiological Specifications for Food (ICMSF, 2002) classified *E. sakazakii* as “severe risk for a restricted population, representing a threat of death or chronic sequels of long duration”.

From the age distribution of the reported cases, it is deduced that the population at risk are the infants under one year old, especially premature and low-birth weight infants, as well as the immunocompromised and those born from HIV + mothers. The infant formula can become contaminated through the raw ingredients used in the production of the formula, through contamination of the formula after pasteurization or through contamination of the reconstituted formula used by the caregivers at the hospital or at home prior to feeding. From the powdered infant formulas, sources of contamination can accumulate in bottles and utensils used on the preparation of feeding bottles, facilitating the dissemination of the bacteria. Thus, although the occurrence of *E. sakazakii* in the powdered infant formula is low, its control depends on the application of strict hygienic conditions, especially the control of time/temperature of preparation, handling and storage of the reconstituted formula and also the continuous control of the production line since the product is not commercially sterile and is rich in nutrients which favours the multiplication of bacteria.