

How to bottle feed

Before you leave hospital your midwife/nurse will offer to show you how to bottle feed. You will be offered an opportunity to practice this with your midwife/nurse present. Specific advice may be required if your baby is premature, sick or has special needs.

Equipment

- A clean baby feeding bottle and a soft, slow flow teat
- In hospital, a new disposable bottle and teat is supplied for each feed
- Expressed breast milk / infant formula that has been safely stored, handled and prepared

How to give your baby a bottle

- Test the temperature of the feed by letting a little of the breastmilk or formula drip onto the inside of your wrist – it should feel warm but not hot
- Check the flow of the milk from the teat – it should “drip” from the teat and not have a fast flow
- Position your baby as close to you as possible. Baby needs to:
 - be semi-upright on your lap
 - have head, neck and body in a straight line
 - be cradled in your arm
 - be positioned so that you can look at each other
- Brush the teat down over baby’s lips to encourage mouth opening
- Allow teat to be drawn well into baby’s mouth
- Tip bottle up just enough so milk fills the end of the teat
- Keep bottle as horizontal as possible to allow baby to “pace” the feed
- Tip bottle down or remove it from baby’s mouth if baby is drinking too fast or breath-holding. If this happens, your baby may need a teat with a slower flow
- Give baby breaks during feed if restless. Remove the bottle and see whether baby wants to burp - offer bottle again when baby is ready
- Bottle feeds usually take around 20 to 30 minutes
- In hospital, write on your baby’s feed chart after each feed: date, time, amount of milk taken and type of milk (i.e. expressed breast milk or infant formula)
- The amount of milk to offer baby can vary with each baby. Your midwife/nurse will discuss this with you.

Safety tips when bottle feeding

- Talk to your doctor/midwife/nurse if your baby is:
 - coughing, gagging, or fussing during bottle feeds
 - always taking a long time to feed
- Seek immediate medical advice if baby has colour changes during a feed (i.e. goes blue or is very pale) and stops breathing

For more information

- Queensland Health booklet “Child Health Information Your guide to the first 12 months”
- Children’s Health Queensland fact sheet: Bottle feeding safety
<https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/chq/information-for-families/fact-sheets/>



National Standard 2. Partnering with Consumers
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