

# BOTTLE FEEDING THE BREASTFED BABY



## A NOTE FOR YOU

Unless there is a medical need, it helps to wait until after breastfeeding is established (usually around 4-6 weeks) before offering a bottle.

During the early weeks, you and your baby are both learning how to breastfeed. Offering milk via a bottle can confuse this process because bottle feeding and breastfeeding are different skills to learn! Milk flows quite freely from a bottle so some babies can get hooked on the instant gratification and sometimes early bottles may disrupt breastfeeding. If there is a need for extra milk to be given before you feel breastfeeding is established it can be helpful to use alternative methods such as using a feeding cup or syringe.

## CUP FEEDING

Cup feeding can be useful when you need to offer extra milk but wish to avoid using a bottle. It's best to have a midwife, health visitor or infant feeding specialist show you this technique. It involves allowing the baby to use their tongue to lap at the milk (like a little cat!) rather than tipping the cup up (which can be a choking risk).

Older babies who resist a bottle may be happier to take milk from a cup too. Ask for info at a breastfeeding cafe!

## HOW MUCH MILK?

Most babies over the age of 6 weeks will take around 1 to 1.5oz an hour since their last feed. An average size bottle for a breastfed baby is therefore usually around 2-4oz depending on when they last fed.

Remember breastfeeding is not just food, so while a baby might fall asleep happily on the breast, they may need additional settling after a bottle.

Younger babies take much less milk than this as they have very tiny tummies and newborn feeds can be just a few teaspoons worth! Ask your midwife for advice on amounts if supplementing a newborn.

## RESPONSIVE OR 'PACED' BOTTLE FEEDING

If you want to use a bottle your midwife or health visitor may talk to you about "Paced" or "Responsive" bottle feeding.

In paced feeding the baby is sat upright and the bottle held in a horizontal position, with milk covering the hole in the teat but not filling it completely. The feed is slower, allowing the baby time to realise when they have a full tummy rather than gulping down a large feed quickly. Useful when you are working hard pumping the milk!

Paced feeding may also help to reduce the chance of your baby fussing at the breast because they prefer the fast flow from a bottle.

There are some useful videos of paced feeding on YouTube.

## RESPONSIVE OR 'PACED' BOTTLE FEEDING



**P** Positioning! Hold baby fairly upright so they can control the flow.

**A** Ask permission! Tease the baby's upper lip with the bottle teat so they reach to accept it themselves.

**C** Cover the hole but don't fill the teat. This will let baby's sucking dictate how much is removed from the bottle.

**E** Easy does it! Allow the baby to take breaks as and when they need to.

**D** Don't encourage baby to finish the bottle if they show signs of being full.

## WHICH BOTTLE?

There are a lot of bottle companies trying to convince people that their bottle is the "best" kind for breastfed babies. They are advertised with lots of appealing information suggesting they will allow babies to switch easily between breast and bottle.

The truth is, no bottle can really mimic what happens at the breast and all babies are different. Sticking with a newborn flow teat can be helpful and you will usually only need the 4oz bottle size for a breastfed baby. Other than that the best bottle for your baby is one your baby will accept and is easy to clean and sterilise. They should also be BPA free. This might even be the cheapest bottle in the shop!



## WILL PACED FEEDING MAKE MY BABY WINDY?

Paced bottle feeding, done correctly, is less likely to cause wind than if baby is fed the traditional way. If a baby gulps down milk too fast, they find it harder to co-ordinate breathing and swallowing which results in wind. In paced feeding, the calmer speed and the fact baby is sitting up, allows air to come out through the nose easily.

## USING FORMULA?

If you are using formula milk it is important it is prepared safely and correctly. You can find information on how to prepare infant formula on the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/making-up-infant-formula/>

You can also find information on the nutritional content of formula on First Steps Nutrition:

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/parents-carers>

## FURTHER HELP

You may find this information helpful alongside our leaflet 'Expressing Breast Milk'

[www.CharnwoodBRAS.co.uk](http://www.CharnwoodBRAS.co.uk)  
Contact us on 07583041054