

How to Feed Your Baby from A Bottle

Once you arrive home from the hospital you may have questions about how to feed your full term baby from a bottle. Whether you use formula or Expressed Breast Milk (EBM), we want to make sure you have the information you need to safely feed your baby.

Amount and frequency

In the hospital you may have been told to limit the amount to 5-10 milliliters (1-2 teaspoons). Now that you are home, during the first week a baby should be taking around 1-3 ounces (30-90 milliliters) every 2-3 hours for EBM, or every 3 hours on average for formula.

How can I tell if I overfed?

They will let you know by vomiting it up (may also come out the nose). Vomiting is more forceful and has more volume than just spit up. All babies have a need to suck, some more than others. If you have a sucker, it can sometimes be hard to tell if their fussiness is due to hunger or something else.

- Try not to always give a bottle to a fussy baby, we don't want to overfeed them.
- If they seem to have eaten well and are still fussy, try a pacifier. If it is just a need to keep sucking, the pacifier will work.
- If they are still hungry, they'll likely suck but then keep crying. Go through your checklist of other things: diaper change, swaddle, being held, etc.

How can I tell if I underfed?

They will let you know by likely continuing to cry if you give them a pacifier and their fists will be bunched up.

Burping

When do I burp my baby?

You don't have to burp your baby but some feel it helps prevent spitting up. If you want to burp, try it about halfway through the feeding and again once the feeding is finished.

- You only need to try for a minute or two, you **don't** need to burp for 5, 10, 20 minutes.
- It's okay to put a baby on their back even if they haven't burped. Don't worry-even if they do spit up, they can manage it.

How do I burp?

- Put them up on your shoulder (remember to support their head) and gently pat their back.
- Or, sit them up on your knee with one hand cradling the head, lean them forward a bit and gently pat their back.

Positioning

- You can feed the baby in whatever position works, as long as they are not upside down and they are swallowing.
- Don't prop the bottle with blankets or such. Always hold the baby.

Preparing the bottles

- You don't have to use special water for making formula. As long as you can drink from your tap, so can baby.
- Make sure to wash your hands and follow the directions on the formula container. You want to mix the right amount of water with the right amount of formula.
- You don't have to heat the formula or EBM (some babies don't care if it's cold). If you do want to warm it, remember: **do not** to use a microwave. You

can run the bottle under hot tap water, heat a pan of water on the stove and put the bottle in it, or use a bottle warmer.

Reusing/storage

- Once the baby's mouth has touched the nipple on the bottle, whatever is left over after 1 hour needs to be thrown away.
- You can make bottles ahead of time and put them in the refrigerator, but make sure you are not making more than they usually drink to avoid wasting any.
- If you are pumping and giving EBM in a bottle, there is a handout in your folder from Labor and Delivery that reviews how long breast milk can be stored (it varies with storage method).

Washing

- Wash bottles and nipples in between feeds with hot, soapy water just as you do with your dishes.
- You can also put bottles in a dishwasher.
- You don't necessarily need to sterilize the bottles as long as you have washed them and your hands are clean when preparing.

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