

Bottle Feeding

Feeding your baby can be a happy time for you and your baby. If you feel calm and relaxed during the feeding, so will your baby. Newborn infants need to be fed every 2 to 4 hours. As your baby gets older, he or she will be able to go 4 to 6 hours between feedings.

Getting Ready to Feed Your Baby

- Warm the formula by placing the bottle in a pan of hot water and letting it reach room temperature. Formula should not be warmer than room temperature because a higher heat destroys some of the vitamins. **Do not warm the bottle in a microwave oven** because the bottle might explode or the baby could be burned from the hot formula.
- Test the temperature of the formula by shaking a few drops on the inside of your wrist. It should feel warm, not hot.
- The hole in the nipple should be just large enough that the milk drops slowly when the bottle is held with the nipple down. If the hole in the nipple is too small, your baby might suck in too much air. Also a hole that is too small can be bad because the baby might get tired of sucking and refuse the bottle. If the hole is too large, your baby can choke on the formula.
- Make sure your baby is dressed comfortably and his diaper is dry before you begin feeding.



Picture 1 Hold your baby during feedings.

Bottle Feeding

1. Wash your hands before feeding your baby.
2. Sit in a comfortable position. Hold your baby in the curve of your arm close to your body (Picture 1). Hold his head and back tilted up. This position will give him the comfort he needs to enjoy his food and help keep him from choking.

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3. Always hold the bottom of the bottle up so that the formula fills the nipple. This keeps your baby from sucking air.
4. Let your baby eat until he is full. Depending on age, babies will take 1-1/2 to 8 ounces at each feeding.
5. To get rid of swallowed air, "burp" your baby 2 or 3 times during the feeding. To do this, hold him in a sitting position on your lap and support his chin and chest with one hand while you gently pat his back with your other hand until he burps air. Or you can hold him up against your chest and pat his back until he burps. Place a towel or burp cloth under baby's chin. Sometimes a little formula comes up when the baby burps.

After Feeding

Rinse the bottle, nipple, rings and cap in cold water to keep formula from sticking to it. Then, wash items in hot water with dishwashing liquid or in a dishwasher (nipples should not be washed in a dishwasher). Rinse thoroughly and allow to air dry. Avoid using a bottle brush to scrub the bottle. The brush may damage the bottle.

Safety

- Don't change your baby's formula without checking with your doctor first.
- A baby should always be held with his head and shoulders up when being fed. Babies should not be fed while they are lying flat because formula may flow into the tube that leads into the middle ear. This can cause inflammation (in-fla-MA-shun). If this is not treated, it can cause hearing loss.
- Never prop your baby's bottle. He or she may choke. Your baby also needs to feel the safety and closeness of being held by you.
- Don't let your baby go to bed with a bottle. When your baby's teeth start to come in, the formula that stays around the teeth during sleep can cause cavities.
- Formula that's not properly refrigerated can spoil and cause diarrhea. Use the Helping Hand, *Bottle Feeding: Formula Preparation*, HH-IV-7, as a guide.
- Don't save formula that baby did not drink. Throw it away. There is a loss of vitamins and a danger of bacteria (germs) growing.

Don't put honey or corn syrup in your baby's formula. Caution: *Infants under one year of age should not be fed honey.* Honey is not sterile. It may contain harmful bacteria that can cause food poisoning in infants.

If you have any questions, please ask your doctor or nurse or call_____ .