

Bottle feeding like breastfeeding



Feeding is a special time and even when being bottle fed; baby can experience some of the benefits of breastfeeding.

Mom should do the feedings

You, the mother should do the majority of feeds, as it would be if breastfeeding, for optimal social and emotional growth of your baby. When bottle feeding, it is easier to pass the baby off for others to feed, but strong bonding with the primary care giver, Mother, is what baby needs most.

Devote your attention to your baby

Stop other activities and devote yourself to baby during most feedings. Turn off the stove. Let the phone go to voice mail and let your attention be on the baby.

Hold the baby and the bottle

Hold the baby for feedings and often if using a pacifier. Never prop the bottle. Look at, talk, stroke and play with baby while he eats. This is good for his emotional and intellectual development.

You should hold the bottle for all feedings, even for older babies. Consider the bottle part of you, not the baby. So even when baby is old enough to hold the bottle himself, you continue to hold it also.

Switch sides

Switch sides half way through the feeding or every other feed. This enhances baby's eye development and eye-hand coordination on both sides.

Paced bottle feeding

Choose a bottle nipple that is round, straight and tapers, not bulbous. Choose a slow flow nipple. The feeding should take 15-20 minutes, so choose a bottle nipple that delivers a flow at about that pace. Hold your baby nearly upright and the bottle nearly horizontal. Be patient and respectful of baby, waiting for him to open his mouth rather than pushing the bottle in.

Place the tip of the nipple just below his nose and let him "reach" for it. Or tap the lower lip until the baby opens WIDE. The baby's lips should touch the collar of the nipple.



Let baby pace his own feeding. Don't force him to finish a bottle if he indicates he is done. Let him go to sleep in your arms as he might have done at the breast.

Skin to skin

Breastfed babies get large doses of skin to skin contact daily. Give your baby some skin to skin contact while bottle feeding. Baby can be skin to skin with your arm, chest, tummy or breast. Consider learning infant massage. The benefits of skin to skin contact have been found to be even more powerful than previously understood.

Don't rush baby to wean from the bottle. Enjoy and treasure this special time.