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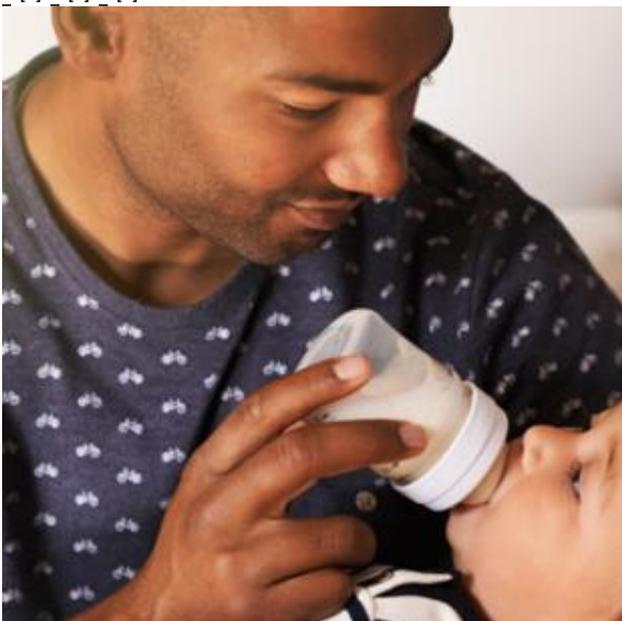


## How to move from breastfeeding to bottle-feeding: A parents' guide

Whether you want to express breast milk or you're thinking of supplementing with baby formula, try these 13 tips on how to introduce a bottle.

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## How to move from breastfeeding to bottle-

# feeding: A parents' guide

Whether you want to express breast milk or you're thinking of supplementing with baby formula, try these 13 tips on how to introduce a bottle.

Thursday, August 6th, 2020

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There are many reasons parents may consider to introduce a bottle. It's up to you and your baby to decide when to stop breastfeeding and it can help to get advice from your healthcare provider or a lactation consultant beforehand. Remember, supplementing with expressed breast milk or with formula does not have to mean the end of breastfeeding. If you have decided to move from breastfeeding to bottle-feeding and are wondering how to introduce a bottle, you could try offering [expressed milk](#) <sup>[6]</sup> in a bottle, or breastfeed at one feeding and offer a bottle of baby formula at another. However you choose to feed your baby, remember to offer them milk when they shows you signs of hunger, and stop when they show you that they have had enough.

If you're thinking about introducing a bottle, here are some tips to make it easier for both of you.

## 1. Wait until breastfeeding is established, if you can.

Generally, it may help if you breastfeed exclusively at first and then Babies learn to use a different kind of suck at the bottle than at the breast. So if you want to continue breastfeeding while sometimes bottle-feeding, wait until your milk supply is properly established first. This will help to avoid nipple confusion, which is when your baby gets more familiar with the feel of a bottle nipple, and begins to have trouble latching onto your breast.

## 2. Plan ahead

If you've decided to introduce bottle-feeding for reasons such as another caregiver will be sharing the feeding responsibilities or you will be going back to work, help your little one master it by starting a few weeks beforehand. Get into the routine of giving bottles during the time of day when you'll be away, so your baby knows what to expect, and when. This allows you both time to readjust, avoiding any last minute panics.

### **3. Express milk**

If you want to keep your milk supply up, you could pump between feedings. This way you can give your caregiver bottles of breast milk to feed your baby when you're not there, and still continue to breastfeed in the evenings and on weekends. Aim to pump two to three times (about every three hours) to keep your milk supply up and stay in sync with how you'd normally breastfeed. If you are back at work, check in with your employer to see what if they have any provisions in place to make pumping at work easier. Looking for more tips? See [Expressing Breast Milk: Step by Step](#). [6]

### **4. Practice pumping**

There are a large range of breast pumps on the market. You can choose from electric or hand held pumps and your choice may depend on how much you require or intend to use it. Different methods of expressing and different pumping equipment may take a bit of practice. It can take a few minutes for your milk to start flowing when you express, so find a quiet place and try to relax. Experiment and find out the best possible ways and options for yourself and your baby.

### **5. Consider combination feeding**

If expressing isn't for you, you may prefer supplementing with formula instead. This is where you offer either breast milk or formula at different feedings. If you are away from home during the day, you may decide to offer formula during the time you are away from your baby and continue to nurse before you leave and when you get home. Don't forget that breast milk is produced on a supply and demand system, so if you are breastfeeding less frequently the amount of breast milk you produce may decrease.

### **6. Find the best baby formula to suit your little one**

There are two main categories of infant formula depending on the baby's age. Stage 1 infant formula is suitable from birth onwards. Stage 2 infant formula is for babies over six months, and has more calcium and iron to complement the diet of older babies. There are many baby formula brands, and choosing the best baby formula for you and your child is up to you. Some contain probiotics (friendly bacteria that are also naturally found in breast milk) or DHA, which is an important building block of baby's brain. There are also organic options available. Consult your healthcare provider if you need guidance. For a guide to introducing formula, see [Baby Formula: Choosing, Introducing & more](#). [7]

## 7. Take a gradual approach

Try offering a bottle of milk instead of your breast at one feeding a day (maybe the one your baby is least attached to, such as mid-morning or mid-afternoon), and see how it goes. Once you and your baby have gotten used to this, you could then think about swapping another breastfeed for a bottle-feed. This will give you both time to adjust and will reduce the chances of your breasts becoming engorged, which can be one of the signs of mastitis. You can use expressed breast milk or formula. You can introduce whole cow's milk (3.25% milk fat) between 9 and 12 months, once your baby is eating a variety of iron-rich foods. .

## 8. Pick your moment

It's likely your baby will be more willing to try a bottle when they're relaxed and happy. If they shows you signs that they're hungry—perhaps an hour or two after a regular feeding—you may find this is a good time to go from breast to bottle as they should be interested but not hungry enough to be frustrated or upset.

## 9. Position them correctly

How you bottle-feed your baby is very important. The traditional way is to support your baby in a semi-upright position, with their head supported in the crook of your arm and still hold them skin-to-skin when you can. Hold the bottle so that the milk completely fills the nipple to ensure you baby isn't swallowing air. Don't don't prop the bottle and don't put your baby to bed with a bottle as these increase the risk of choking.

## 10. Share feeding duties

Some moms find it works better if someone else gives the bottle to the baby to begin with, and takes them to a different place than usual to feed. This is so your baby can't smell your breast milk and start looking for your breast instead. Not only does this allow you to have a bit of a break, but it provides a special opportunity for your partner or another caregiver to bond with the baby and develop an ongoing feeding relationship. Here are some [tips to help rally your support system](#) [8].

## 11. Try different nipples

There are many different types of nipples available, including slow-flow nipples that manufacturers claim can help when going from breast to bottle as they more closely resemble the flow of milk from the breast. If you find your baby isn't taking to the bottle or gags when drinking, it might be worth experimenting with different nipples.

## 12. Consider using a cup

If your baby is about six months old and learning how to drink from a cup, you may not need to introduce a bottle at all. Offering milk in a cup will help hone baby's developing drinking skills.

## 13. Remember you're doing great!

Introducing a bottle can be an emotional time for both you and your baby. Make time for plenty of cuddles throughout the process. Take a minute to remind yourself of the fantastic job you've done so far in feeding your little one, and know that this is going to continue—however you choose to do it.

It's important that you feel empowered to make informed parenting decisions, and supported and confident in your feeding choices. That way, you can focus on what matters most—spending time with your little one. So don't forget that if you need extra help or have any health concerns as you transition, talk to your healthcare provider.

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Last revised: April, 2020

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