

Bottle feeding Guide

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Introduction

It is a well-known fact that “breast is best” and indeed breast milk contains rich essential nutrients and antibodies needed to promote a baby’s growth and immunity. Whilst all healthcare professionals encourage breastfeeding for this very good reason, there may be times when mothers make the choice to use bottles to express their breast milk into. They may wish to express their own breast milk into a milk container/bottle to allow someone else (perhaps the father) to feed baby; they may express and store precious breast milk into a bottle for storage whilst at work; some may be advised by their health visitor or paediatrician to give supplementary bottle feeds to boost their baby’s growth whilst some mothers cannot physiologically breast feed, hence they will need to provide their baby with formula milk. What ever the reason may be, we cannot run away from the fact that bottle feeding requires skill!

With proper guidance, most problems can be easily overcome. Do not hesitate to ask your midwife or health visitor for help or more information on breastfeeding. The information below highlights key practical tips about bottle feeding that perhaps you never knew before.

How many bottles will I need to get me started?

You will generally need:

- Six bottles with teats and caps
- A bottle brush
- A breast pump (ideally) or formula feeds (depending on your situation)
- Sterilizing equipment



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Type and size of bottles

There are a variety of bottles on the market and really it's a matter of trial and error to see what suits your baby best. However here are three important questions that you could ask yourself before buying any bottle:



1. Are the benefit claims made on the bottle packaging such as "reduces colic" backed by hard scientific evidence such as clinical trials etc...indicated on the packaging?
2. Does the bottle system have a naturally shaped teat to encourage a wide open mouth for a proper latch-on?
3. Does the bottle have clear markings for accurate measurement of breast or formula feeds?



Which teats and why?

The teat size is important as these are designed to suit babies at the different stages of their development. Most packaging bear age indications to help guide you on finding the right teat. Keep in mind though, that these indications are approximate as babies develop at different rates. You will know when your baby is ready to move into a faster flow rate because he or she will try to suck harder to get the milk more quickly. They may also show signs of tiredness or frustration during feeding.



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How to bottle feed Before the feed

Feeding breast milk:

While most babies prefer warm milk, some are happy with it at room temperature. Should you decide to heat up your milk, always check the temperature on the inside of your wrist before you feed your baby, to make sure you do not scald your baby's mouth. Warm the milk only 20 minutes before feeding to avoid bacterial build-up. To cool the milk, cover the teat with a cap and hold the bottle under cold running water. Some babies don't mind cold milk. Others prefer it warm. Never warm the milk in a microwave as there is a risk of uneven heating and this could scald your baby's mouth.

For formula feeds:

Check the sell-by date. Always make up each feed as required, put boiling water into the bottle first and not cooled boiled water and do not store it once made as the powder itself is not sterile. Never use more or less than what is instructed to make the feed and don't add other ingredients such as sugar, honey, rusks or baby rice. Your baby will eventually settle into a routine but be sure to respond to your baby's need (i.e don't force your baby to finish the bottle)

During the feed

Find a comfortable position in which you can keep up holding your baby while you are feeding. Some babies take a little milk, might pause for some sleep, and wake up for more. So be patient.

Encourage your baby to open wide by touching the teat of the bottle to your baby's lower lip. As your baby opens their mouth, gently introduce the teat by making sure your baby's tongue is down. Your baby's lips should be around the wide part of the teat at the bottom. This is an important feature of the design, encouraging a natural jaw and tongue movement in order to maintain the natural suckling behaviour. As you feed, keep the bottle tilted so that the teat is always full of milk to prevent your baby taking in air. Gently pull the bottle from the baby's mouth to release the vacuum if the teat becomes flattened. Should the teat become blocked, immediately replace it with another sterile teat so your baby does not become frustrated.



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How to bottle feed **After the feed**

Gently pat your baby's back to help remove any air that has been taken in while feeding. All unused milk should be thrown away to reduce the risk of bacterial infection.

Speak to your midwife or health visitor about feeding when they call at your home. Talk to them about any worries or problems that you may have or contact Philips AVENT for help.

Sterilization

It is of the upmost importance to be as hygienic as possible when dealing with newborns and babies up to 1 year of age as their immune system is not yet properly developed to fight off bacteria. Poor cleaning of breast and bottle feeding equipment may lead to tummy upsets and diarrhoea.

This is why it is important to first wash your equipment in warm, soapy water, and then sterilise it before each feed to ensure that bacteria have been removed. There are three commonly used sterilization systems/units seen in the marketplace: steam, microwave and chemical sterilization.

In some countries, like the USA it may be common to just wash bottles and teats with warm soapy water or just sanitise them in a dishwasher. However sterilization has the added advantage of being a terminal event, killing all known bacteria. So no matter what method you choose, once the materials have been sterilised, make sure you have washed your hands before giving it to your baby. Be sure to also replace scratched bottles and worn teats, as they cannot be sterilised properly anymore.



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Philips AVENT Tips for Bottle Feeding

- 1 Clean and sterilise all feeding parts before each use
- 2 Do not use abrasive cleaning agents or anti-bacterial cleaners with bottles and teats
- 3 Wash your hands thoroughly and ensure surfaces are clean before handling sterilised components
- 4 For inspection of the teat, pull it in each direction
- 5 Place the teat in boiling water for 5 minutes before first use to ensure hygiene
- 6 Throw away bottle and teats at the first sight of damage, weakness or scratching.
- 7 Replace teats and spouts after 3 months use
- 8 Do not warm milk in a microwave as this may cause uneven heating and could scald your baby
- 9 Always check the milk temperature before feeding
- 10 Make sure that the bottles are not over-tightened
- 11 Do not allow your baby to play with small parts or run/walk while feeding

