

Insert from the Baby Friendly Initiative: Infant feeding and Relationships

Responsive bottle feeding

If you have decided to bottle feed your baby, the following information will help you do so as safely as possible and will help you and your baby have a close and loving feeding experience. Even if you have bottle fed before, talk to your health visitor about the latest information on sterilising, types of milk to use and how to make up feeds as safely as possible.

It is best for just you and your partner to feed baby in the early weeks. This will help baby to feel safe and secure, get used to your way of feeding, and enable you to form a close loving bond with her.

Tips for bottle feeding

- Offer feeds when baby shows early signs of being hungry.
- If baby is upset, try to soothe her before you offer a feed. Skin contact is great for calming babies at any time.
- Hold baby close to you, in a semi-upright position.
- Look into baby's eyes and talk gently to her.
- Gently rub the teat against baby's top lip to encourage her to open her mouth and poke her tongue out.
- Place the teat into the front of baby's mouth allowing her to draw it further in, keeping the bottle in a horizontal position (or just slightly tipped) to prevent milk flowing too fast.
- Follow baby's cues for when they need a break and gently remove the teat or bring the bottle downwards to cut off the flow of milk.
- Your baby will know how much milk they need. Forcing your baby to finish a feed will be distressing and can mean your baby is overfed.

