If a newborn loses too much weight or won’t latch, you will need to choose a feeding device to give supplemental milk. If all goes well, though, just breastfeed away, but introduce a bottle by 3-4 weeks.

**FINGER FEEDING**
- If supplementation is necessary in the hospital, do not use a bottle.

  - The amount of colostrum will be small, so **finger feeding** with a small syringe works well and avoids concerns about nipple confusion or bottle nipple preference.

  - A larger 1 oz (30mL) syringe with a tube attached can also be considered.

**SUPPLEMENTAL NURSING SYSTEM**
- If desired, a **supplemental nursing system** can be used as pictured, or by using the same syringe system as in the finger feeding picture.

  - Expressed breastmilk, donor milk or formula is placed in the bottle around mom’s neck and drains to baby’s mouth via a tube taped at the nipple. A clasp controls the flow of milk.

**BOTTLE FEEDING**
- People are often overly concerned that giving a bottle will cause the baby to prefer the bottle over the breast.
- Be reassured that most babies transition between breast and bottle fine if proper bottle nipples are used.
- Decisions must be individualized, however, and feeding methods can change over time and according to circumstances.
- Two things to consider are
  1) the shape of the nipple
  2) how fast the milk flows, i.e., size of the hole.

  - Be aware that the advertised flow rates of nipples are not standardized, so a slow flow nipple of brand X can flow much faster than a slow flow nipple of brand Y. Trial and error is required.

  - For term babies, a slow flow nipple is usually recommended so that bottle feedings are not easier than nursing.

  - For premies with less stamina, a faster flow nipple may be necessary to avoid feeding fatigue so baby can more easily consume enough to gain weight. They should be able to consume about 1 ounce in about 5-10 minutes.

  - When the “triple feeding” regimen is required (nurse – supplement – pump) for more than a couple days, there are reasons to consider switching to the bottle for the supplementing step:

    - Bottle feedings are less cumbersome for parents to accomplish when they are exhausted and ready to “hit the wall!”
    - Some sleepy or premies don’t gain well until they are allowed to regulate the flow of milk themselves by using a bottle. Syringe and finger feedings require you to anticipate baby’s suck-swallow pattern.

  - If not needed before this, you must introduce a bottle at about 3-4 weeks old.
    - If you don’t, some babies will refuse bottles forever.
    - Some need daily reminders, whereas others are OK to practice bottles only about once per week.
    - Don’t make the mistake of waiting until a couple days before returning to work to try the bottle, only to panic because it will be difficult for the daycare provider to feed baby!

**WHICH BOTTLE NIPPLE WORKS BEST?**
- It is the opinion of this author that a nipple with a narrow base works best for breastfed babies.
- Examples: Ventaire, Evenflo, Dr. Brown, Medela, Parent’s Choice