Bottles and Supplemental Feeding Devices for Breastfed Babies

If your newborn latches and removes milk well, doesn’t lose more than 7-10% of birth weight and then gains 1oz per day after milk is in, it is best to just breastfeed for the first 3-4 weeks so supply and demand naturally works out. If supplementation is necessary early on, you will need to choose a feeding device.

Some babies may experience "nipple confusion" or "bottle nipple preference," but if a properly shaped nipple is introduced, most eagerly nursing babies don’t have an issue with bottle feedings. Decisions need to be individualized, however, and feeding methods can change according to circumstances.

Alternative feeding methods include cup feeding, “finger feeding,” or a supplemental nursing system (SNS).

These feeding options can be cumbersome. If supplementation is necessary for more than a few days, we often move to a bottle nipple. Also, if your baby is very sleepy, does not communicate hunger well, and isn’t gaining weight even with supplementing, moving to the bottle allows the baby to regulate the flow and thus consume more milk.

**You should introduce a bottle at around 3-4 weeks old.**

If you don’t, it may be very difficult for some babies to accomplish this.

Some babies need daily reminders, where as others are OK to practice bottles only once per week. You don’t want to panic a couple days before you return to work, because your baby refuses to take a bottle!

***************These nipples ARE RECOMMENDED***************

Use a slow flow nipple with a standard base and insert it far into your baby's mouth to keep the jaw open wide. Burp after an ounce or so. This allows time for your baby to feel full, and will help avoid overfeeding.

Medela Wide  Medela Narrow

The wide nipple comes with most pumps purchased. It is a bit wide but the slope is steep enough that the baby’s mouth will usually grasp it OK if it is inserted far enough.

Dr. Brown  Playtex  Evenflow

Narrow nipples are best, because parents don’t need to decide how far to insert it. Push it in ALL THE WAY!

Note that the Dr. Brown and Playtex also come in the WIDE size, so pay attention to what you purchase.

***************These nipples are NOT RECOMMENDED for most babies***************

Avent  Tommee Tippee  Dr. Brown  Playtex  Born Free  Breastflow

Their lips settle on the small portion of the nipple so they suck with their mouths “small.” These are incorrectly marketed for use with breastfed babies.