

Paced Bottle Feeding

What is it?

- Paced bottle feeding is a technique which allows your baby to drink at a comfortable rate.
- In traditional bottle feeding it may look like your baby is very hungry as she gulps but she may actually be trying to swallow quickly to avoid choking. This can be unsafe for baby.
- This method of bottle feeding is safer than traditional bottle feeding and helps prevent overfeeding.

What are the signs my baby is hungry?

Your baby will:

- Start to wake up
- Make rapid eye movement under the eyelids
- Lick/suck/move her mouth
- Turn her head while opening her mouth (rooting)
- Make smacking and grunting sounds
- Bring hands to mouth and fists become tight
- Cry (the last sign of hunger)

Try to feed your baby when you see the early feeding cues. Your baby will be more content and feed easier if she is not crying.

How do I pace feeds?

- Hold your baby in an upright position, supporting her head and neck.
- Feed your baby skin-to-skin if possible.
- Use a medium or wide-based, slow-flow nipple.
- Touch the baby's upper lip with the bottle nipple to encourage her to open her mouth wide.
- Gently allow baby to pull the nipple into her mouth. Do not force the nipple into baby's mouth.

- Keep the bottle horizontal so that the nipple is partially full. This will slow the flow of milk. It is not necessary to keep the nipple full of milk as all babies swallow air while feeding.
- Count your baby's sucks and swallows. If your baby does not take a breath by the third to fifth suck, tip the bottle down, keeping it in baby's mouth and giving her a 3-5 second pause to let her breathe.
- Often baby will swallow, then breathe, then start to suck again when she is ready to begin feeding again.

How do I know my baby is finished?

- Baby falls asleep
- Turns head to side
- No longer sucks
- Lets go of the nipple
- Closes her lips

How much should my baby drink?

- Newborns have very small stomachs. In the first 24 hours a baby's stomach can hold 6 ml per feeding. On the second day, 12 ml per feeding and on the third day, up to 30 ml or one ounce per feeding.
- By one week, your baby's stomach is the size of an egg and can hold about 2 ounces per feeding.
- Gradually increase the amount in the bottle, watching for signs that your baby is finished. Discard any milk your baby does not finish.
- The amount that your baby drinks may vary from feed to feed depending on how hungry she is at that time.

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Remove the bottle if your baby shows any of these dangerous signs:

- Milk spilling from her mouth
- Opening eyes widely
- Stiffening of arms and legs
- Flaring nostrils
- Grimacing
- Lips turning blue

If you see any of the above signs:

- Give your baby a break from feeding and then re-offer the bottle, watching her to see if she is interested in continuing the feeding.
- Try a different nipple on the bottle if these signs happen often.
- If problems continue, see your health care provider and have them watch your baby feed.

If you have any questions about bottle feeding your baby, talk with a Public Health Nurse, call

Let's Talk Parenting

1-800-265-7293 ext. 3616