

Information for Lactation Consultants

Alternative Feeding Methods



When an infant needs a supplement for a medical reason, provide it in a way that is least likely to result in subsequent breast refusal. Babies can safely be fed by tube, cup, spoon, finger or bottle.

Complementary feeding at the breast

Equipment

5 fr feeding tube, peridontal syringe or commercial feeding tube device (FTD)
Pumped breastmilk or formula

Procedure

- Place the infant at breast in cradle or football hold
- Assist the infant to latch-on.
- Slip a 5 Fr feeding tube or peridontal syringe into corner of the infant's mouth or have in place a FTD.
- **or**
- Tape the tubing to the breast so the infant takes both the breast and the tubing in during latch-on. The tubing will be less obtrusive to the infant if it is placed in the corner of the mouth.
- Reward sucking with a small bolus of milk.
- Observe for swallowing and signs of too fast or slow milk flow.



Cup or spoon feeding

Equipment

Medicine cup, shot glass or other small cup
Teaspoon
Pumped breastmilk or formula

Procedure

- Assure infant cannot accidentally hit the cup or spoon
- Fill cup not more than 3/4 full
- Place cup on lip with the fluid level with the edge of the cup
- Allow infant to lap or sip
- Leave the cup in place, only removing to refill it
- Let the infant pace the feeding
- Observe for swallowing and signs of too fast or slow milk flow
- **DO NOT POUR MILK IN INFANT'S MOUTH**
- Stop to burp from time to time

Not an appropriate technique for an infant who is not alert, is sleepy or ill.



Finger feeding

Equipment

5 fr feeding tube and 5-20 cc syringe or commercially available feeding tube device
Pumped breastmilk or formula

Procedure:

- Wash your hands
- Fill the container
- Insert your finger, pad up, slowly in the baby's mouth to the soft palate
- Slip the feeding tube in corner of infant's mouth or have it taped to your finger
- The baby will pull the fluid from the container as he sucks on the finger
- The baby should always be in control of the flow
- Observe for swallowing and signs of too fast or slow milk flow



Paced Bottle Feeding

Equipment

Nipple with medium/wide base (infants mouth should be open to 140° similar to breastfeeding) and a slow flow
Pumped breastmilk or formula

Procedure

- Hold the baby almost **upright**.
- Hold the bottle almost **horizontal** just filling the nipple with fluid.
- Encourage the baby to take it into his mouth until he has a wide latch (140°) and it is deep in his mouth. Let the baby seek for the nipple.
- The feeding should take 15-30 minutes. If the baby drinks too fast, tip the bottle down or remove it to slow the pace of the feeding.
- Mothers can hold the baby cheek to breast for the feeding.



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