

Paced and Responsive Bottle Feeding

to keep feeds pleasant for your baby and avoid overfeeding

The early days with your baby are a great time to get to know and love each other more. This can be done by keeping your baby close to you, enjoying skin-to-skin contact and feeding according to our suggestions below. Babies will feel more secure if most feeds are given by a parent or main care giver, especially in the early weeks, as this will really help with bonding, brain development, and feeding techniques will be consistent.



What is 'paced and responsive' bottle feeding?

1

Feed your baby when they show signs of hunger cues, such as waking up, wriggling, sucking on fingers, opening mouth or moving their head around.

Crying is the last sign your baby gives. Try to start feeding your baby before they cry.

2

Hold your baby close in a semi-upright position and look into their eyes. This helps your baby feel safe and loved.

Give your baby your attention throughout the feed and gently talk to your baby in a soothing way.

3

Softly rub the teat across your baby's top lip and gently insert it into the mouth as your baby opens and searches for the teat.

Keep the bottle horizontal or slightly tipped upwards, to prevent the milk flowing too fast. Drop the bottle downwards if baby needs to pause.

4

Watch your baby for signs they need a break or when they have had enough milk. These cues include splaying of fingers/toes, stopping sucking, spilling milk from mouth, pushing the bottle away, or becoming relaxed or sleepy.

Gently take the teat out of the mouth and gently wind your baby.

5

Your baby will know how much milk they need. Forcing your baby to finish a feed can be distressing for your baby and lead to overfeeding and other problems such as crying, colic, or reflux.

Your baby should control the feed so that it is pleasant and comfortable.

- ✓ It doesn't matter which brand of formula you use; they are all very similar and you don't need to be brand loyal. You can change brands.
- ✓ There is no evidence to support 'special' milks such as 'hungry baby' or 'comfort milks'.
- ✓ Your baby needs 'First Infant Milk' for the first year of life then they can move onto full fat cow's milk. There is no evidence to say your baby needs 'follow on' milk.

- ✗ Never force your baby to finish a feed as this will be distressing and can mean your baby is overfed.
- ✗ Your baby will know how much milk they need. Never leave your baby alone to feed with a propped-up bottle as they may choke on the milk.

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby. If you decide not to breastfeed or to stop breastfeeding, it is possible to restart. Giving infant formula to a breastfed baby will reduce your milk supply. You do not need to eat any special foods while breastfeeding, but it is a good idea for you, just like everyone else, to eat a healthy diet.