

Ways to Give Your Baby Supplemental Feedings (Breastmilk or Formula)

Supplemental Feedings

If your baby is having difficulty latching on to nurse, there are other ways of giving expressed breastmilk or formula to your baby until he or she is able to breastfeed.

Options for feeding a supplement to a breastfed baby include:

- feeding tube device
- cup or spoon feeding
- finger feeding
- bottle feeding.

If you need to give your baby supplemental feedings, talk about your options with your nurse or lactation consultant. Together, you both will decide which options are best for your baby.

Feeding Tube Devices

Feeding tube devices are thin, soft plastic feeding tubes that are attached to a milk container or syringe. The other end is taped next to your nipple.

The device delivers expressed breastmilk or formula while your baby is suckling at your breast.

- Advantages:
 - Your baby will get extra nutrition during breastfeeding.
 - Your baby's suckling at your breast can increase your milk supply.



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(Left) Feeding by cup is done with your baby in an upright (or, sitting) position. Your baby sips or laps the milk when you put a cup or spoon against his or her lower lip.



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A Starter SNS™ feeding tube device delivers expressed breastmilk or formula while your baby is suckling at your breast. Your baby needs to be able to latch-on well to your breast in order to use this device.

- Disadvantages:
 - There are extra pieces of equipment to wash.
 - Your baby needs to be able to latch-on well to your breast.

(over)

Cup or Spoon Feeding

Feeding by cup or spoon is done with your baby in an upright (or, sitting) position. Your baby sips or laps the milk when you put a cup or spoon against his or her lower lip.

- Advantage:
 - This feeding does not interfere with breastfeeding.
- Disadvantage:
 - Your baby may not be able to keep sipping from a cup to get enough milk.

Finger Feeding

Finger feeding can be done by attaching a thin feeding tube onto your finger. The other end of the tube is connected to a syringe that has a measured amount of breastmilk or formula.

Another way is to use a dropper next to your finger.

- Advantages:
 - Finger feeding encourages your baby to curl his or her tongue similar to how he or she latches-on to the breast.
 - Giving supplementation with a dropper next to a finger can encourage your baby to suck and swallow correctly.
- Disadvantages:
 - Using a dropper gives only small amounts of milk. It is not intended for a full feeding.
 - Your baby could depend on finger feeding. It should only be used for 1 to 2 days.

Bottle Feeding

Bottle feeding is the most common way to give a supplemental feeding. It is not, however, recommended for the first few weeks until breastfeeding is established. Giving your baby a bottle too soon can cause latching problems.

- Advantage:
 - Most babies bottle feed well with the correct nipple.
- Disadvantage:
 - Your baby may refuse to breastfeed or may not suckle well at your breast.

Using a Breast Pump

If supplements are given after, or in place of breastfeeding, you will need to use a breast pump to stimulate milk production.

Using a breast pump will help prevent breast fullness or a drop in your milk supply.

Breast pumps are available for you to use during your hospital stay. Talk to your nurse about how to get a breast pump before you leave the hospital.