

How to Bottle Feed Your Premature Baby



Before you and your baby go home, there is some information about feeding that you should know. Make sure that you have fed your baby in the hospital. During this time you will learn how to feed your baby using any method the nurses will show you.

Your baby's special needs:

Before you take your baby home, you will be told what type of formula your baby will be eating. Your baby's doctor will decide the type of formula, the amount to feed your baby, and how often your baby should eat. Please limit your baby to this amount until the first return visit with your baby's doctor. If your baby cries before the next feeding, a pacifier will often satisfy the need to suck. Also check to see that your baby is warm and dry.

Your baby's feeding schedule:

Formula: _____

Amount (ounces): _____

Frequency (hours): _____

Feeding and burping your baby:

- Hold your baby in a position that is comfortable for you when feeding your baby.
- Make sure the nipple is always filled with formula. In this way the baby does not take in air and get a false sense of being full.
- Premature babies have the desire to suck, but often nipple feed slowly and tire easily. Allow for rest periods during the feeding. Stop the feeding if your baby seems to be sleeping and doesn't respond to gentle movement of the nipple.
- Sitting your baby up and rubbing the back will help to wake the baby up. This is also the best way to burp, since you can see your baby's face. Burping the baby half way through the feeding is usually enough.

Preparing your baby's formula:

Prepare the formula according to the instruction provided. (See Ross Lab Booklet). Some doctors recommend sterilizing bottles and nipples, while others prefer cleaning them with hot soapy water. Ask your doctor or nurse which way is best to prepare bottles for your baby.

Positioning your baby after feeding:

Hold your baby upright or cradled in your arms for a few minutes after a feeding. If you return the baby to the crib to sleep, be sure to place the baby on his or her back. Getting to know your baby's feeding habits will make feeding time an enjoyable time for both of you. If you have problems or any questions about feeding your baby after you go home, please call us at (614) 298-8693.

If you would like more written information, please call the Library for Health Information at (614)293-3707. You can also make the request by e-mail: health-info@osu.edu.

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