

Tips for Caregivers

When a mother must be separated from her baby, it is important that baby's caregiver (dad, family members, day care providers) understand how to handle and store of human milk, as well as tips on introducing baby to a bottle or cup.

Protecting Breastfeeding for Mom and Baby

If a baby is cared for away from home, try to allow some quiet time for baby's mom to breastfeed when she drops her baby off and picks her baby up from day care. This allows a mother to shorten the time until her baby feeds at the breast again and will help to protect her milk supply. It also allows a mother time to run an errand or two when she leaves day care without hurrying home to feed a hungry baby.

If baby is in day care for an entire work day, try not to feed baby within one to two hours of the time that mom will arrive to pick baby up. If formula supplement is needed because breast milk is in short supply on a certain day, try to give it earlier in the day or give a smaller amount later in the day. Formula takes longer to digest and may decrease a baby's appetite when mom arrives and would like to breastfeed.

Giving a Bottle

Parents may want to introduce a bottle to baby before leaving baby with a caregiver for the first time. Some babies will take a bottle easily. Others will resist. You may find it easier if the bottle is introduced around three to four weeks of age. If baby resists the bottle, it may be helpful if **someone other than mom offers the bottle.**

If a baby has been exclusively bottle fed pumped milk by mom, there is also a chance that baby may resist taking a bottle from someone other than mom.

Remember that babies were not born to be bottle fed. It is something they have to learn. The following are some tips if a baby resists the bottle:

- Offer the bottle before baby is too hungry. It is hard to learn something new when you are very hungry. Sometimes it helps if baby is just waking and is still drowsy.
- Try **different feeding positions.** Some babies like to be held close in a cradle position. Others prefer to sit facing outwards. Feel free to experiment. You may find it helps to stand and rock or sway while offering the bottle, you may try offering the bottle while baby is in a car seat and then take baby out of their car seat when they have finished the bottle.
- **Tickle baby's mouth with the bottle** and wait until baby opens wide. Don't force the bottle nipple into baby's mouth.

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- Breastfed babies usually do well with a standard size, slow flow nipple. A slow flow nipple means that baby does not have to worry about too much milk coming out and, for the most part, has to suckle to remove milk. This is helpful when a baby is at day care. It may keep a baby from drinking too fast or taking too much milk from the bottle. This is important if a mom is working hard to maintain her milk supply. Baby can easily open all the way around a standard size nipple and take the whole nipple, not just the tip, in his or her mouth. Some wide mouth nipples are hard for a baby to get on deep, even though advertising may promote them as “more like mother’s breast”. Most babies handle a bottle best when they are in a semi-upright position, rather than flat on their back. It helps them to handle the flow.
- Be patient while baby learns. If baby is older than three months, you may want to think about using a feeding cup with a flow valve on it. (This means that baby must suck to get the milk out.) It is not necessary for an older baby to learn to take a bottle. They can drink milk from a cup.
- Babies generally take between 2 and 4 ounces at a feeding 8 to 12 times per day. It is very unlikely that a baby will comfortably take a bottle that contains more than 5 ounces. Between one and six months of age, babies will consume approximately 25 ounces of milk per day.

Storing Milk

(For more detailed information, see our information on **Collecting and Storing Pumped Milk.**)

- Human milk may not look like formula or cow’s milk. It is normal to be white, bluish, yellowish or even brownish in color. Its color may change from bottle to bottle, depending upon when a mom pumped the milk.
- Human milk is not homogenized, so it naturally separates into layers of milk and cream. There may even be particles of fat floating in the milk. Shake gently to mix the milk.
- Human milk is very durable and does not spoil easily. Optimal milk storage at room temperature is 4 hours. Milk kept at room temperature beyond 4 hours is not necessarily bad for a baby, however, it starts to lose some of its protective factors. Spoiled milk will smell sour or taste bad.
- Frozen milk can be defrosted in the refrigerator, or by putting the container of milk in a pan of warm water. **Do not microwave** and do not heat above body temperature. Defrosted milk should not be re-frozen and is good for up to 24 hours if stored in the refrigerator.

Breastfed Babies and Their Stools

- Breastfed babies may stool with each feeding or less often. Most babies will stool at least once a day.
- Their stools are generally mustard yellow and semi liquid. There may be small curds in the liquid. If a baby is not eating solids or formula, their stools generally have a more pleasant smell.