

Chapter 5

Feeding a Baby Using a Bottle and Cup

What's In This Chapter?

By the end of this chapter, child care providers will be able to:

- 1 Describe the proper way to bottle feed.
- 2 State when a child should switch from a bottle to a cup.
- 3 List beverages that are appropriate to serve babies in a bottle and cup.

Most **infants** will be fed with a bottle while in child care and then move to drinking from a cup when ready. Breastmilk and **iron-fortified infant formula** are the only liquids that can be offered to a baby as part of a **reimbursable meal** or snack.

Tip:

Never put cereal in a bottle. If the cereal is mixed in a bottle with breastmilk or infant formula then the breastmilk or infant formula would not be **creditable**.

Before Feeding a Baby a Bottle:

- Wash your hands well with soap and water before preparing the bottle.
- Prepare the bottle. See **Chapter 4: Handling and Storing Breastmilk and Infant Formula** on **page 41** for information on how to prepare a bottle of breastmilk and infant formula.
- After preparing the bottle, but before feeding the baby, hold the bottle upside down over a sink or other container. Make sure falling drops from the nipple follow each other closely but do not fall in a stream. A stream means the opening in the nipple is too big and could allow the liquid to come out too quickly. This can cause the baby to choke or drink more than he or she wants.



Bottle of breastmilk held upside down with drops falling slowly, not a stream.

How To Feed With a Bottle

Feeding a baby can be enjoyable for both you and the baby and should not be rushed. Make sure to always hold the baby upright to prevent choking. Proper positioning also allows you to see when the baby is showing signs of being full.

Paced bottle feeding is a bottle feeding method that is sometimes used with breastfed babies. During paced bottle feeding, the baby tends to have more control over the feeding so it is similar to breastfeeding.

Never force a baby to finish what is in the bottle. Babies will stop eating when they are full. They may eat more when they are going through a growth spurt, or less if they are sick, tired, or just not hungry. Forcing a baby to finish a bottle can lead to the baby developing unhealthy eating habits and be more likely to become overweight or obese later on in life. Do not force a baby to finish a bottle if he or she shows signs of being full.

Do Not Allow a Baby To Carry a Bottle or Cup Around

Babies who carry around a bottle or cup can hurt themselves by dropping it, breaking it, and/or hitting themselves or others with it. They may also try to share their bottles or cups with other babies.



Tip:

Follow the baby's lead. Let the baby pause and take breaks as needed. If the baby is drinking quickly, pause to let the baby burp. If the baby wants to continue eating, he or she will show it by opening his or her mouth and sucking on his or her lips. When full, the baby's sucks will slow down, his or her arms and hands will relax, and he or she will turn away from the bottle or even push the bottle away. A typical feeding session will take 15–20 minutes but should be based on the baby's fullness signs.



Child care provider watching the baby for signs of fullness.

Sleeping or Resting Position Before or After Feeding

Ask parents if their baby's **health care provider** prefers the baby to be in a certain position after eating. Often, babies will nap after a feeding. Most doctors recommend placing babies on their back when resting or sleeping at all times unless there is a medical reason not to. Babies who sleep on their backs are at much lower risk of **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)** than babies who sleep on their stomach or on their sides.

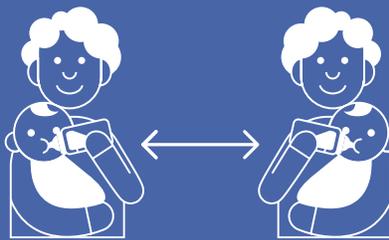
When feeding a baby a bottle, remember to:



Hold the bottle mostly sideways, not straight up.

Make sure the tip of the nipple is filled with breastmilk or infant formula and not air. This will lower the amount of air the baby swallows.

Holding the bottle mostly sideways is used in paced bottle feeding. See “How To Feed With a Bottle” on **page 51** for more information on paced bottle feeding.



Switch which arm you use to hold the baby.

Every so often when feeding a bottle, switch the baby from one arm to the other so the baby has different things to look at. This can also help the baby continue to enjoy feeding on both sides; something that is important when breastfeeding.



Hold the baby during feeding.

Feed a baby while he or she is awake. Do not prop the bottle up on a pillow or other item for the baby to feed him or herself. Propping a bottle may cause choking or suffocation, as well as ear infections and tooth decay.



Hold the baby in the cradle of your arm, so that he or she is almost upright.

This keeps the baby secure, helps you see if the baby is showing signs of hunger or fullness, and can help prevent the baby from choking or getting too much liquid at once.



Burp during natural breaks in the feeding or at the end of the feeding.

Burp the baby by gently patting or rubbing the baby's back while he or she is resting on your shoulder or sitting on your lap.



Brush the nipple of the bottle across the baby's upper lip.

Wait for the baby's mouth to open before feeding.

How To Prevent Babies or Children From Drinking Another Child's Bottle (or Cup)

Do not let babies or children carry around bottles or cups. If a child drops a bottle, pick it up immediately, place it out of reach of other children, and clean up any spilled breastmilk or formula with soap and water.

- When children are drinking from a cup, clearly label the cup with the child's full name. It may also be helpful to give each child his or her own distinct-looking cup. This way, you and the child can identify the cup easily. This may help prevent another child from drinking from a cup that is not his or her own.
- At the end of the day, send all bottles home with the parent who brought the bottles. Never leave used bottles sitting around.

For more information on what to do if an infant or child drinks the wrong breastmilk, visit the CDC's website: https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/other_mothers_milk.htm. Check with your local health department to see if there are additional steps you need to follow.



Parent providing breastmilk that is labeled with the baby's full name and date the breastmilk was pumped.

If a Child Drinks From Another Child's Bottle or Cup



If a child has been mistakenly fed or has drunk from another child's bottle or cup of breastmilk, **inform the parents of both children** and follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- **Tell the mother who provided the breastmilk that the bottle was given to the wrong child, and ask:**
 - When the breastmilk was **pumped** and how it was handled before it was taken to your **child care site**.
 - Whether she has ever had a Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) test and, if so, would she be willing to share the results with the parents of the child who drank her breastmilk.
 - If she does not know whether she has ever been tested for HIV, would she be willing to contact her health care provider and find out if she has been tested.
 - If she has never been tested for HIV, would she be willing to be tested and share the results with the parents of the other child.
- **Discuss the mix up with the parent of the child who was given the wrong bottle:**
 - Tell them that their child was given breastmilk meant for another child.
 - Tell them that the risk of transmission of HIV and other diseases is very small.
 - Encourage the parent to notify the child's health care provider of the exposure.
 - Give the parents information on when the milk was pumped and how the milk was handled before it was taken to the child care site. This way, they can inform their own health care provider who can provide information on what steps or precautions are needed.

Drinking From a Cup

Many babies are able to drink small amounts from a cup held by another person around 6 months of age or later. Babies are usually developmentally ready to drink from a cup when they can sit without support and seal their lower lip on the rim of the cup.



Child care provider helping a baby drink from a cup.

How Can You Help a Baby Learn To Drink From a Cup?



Child care provider offering a cup to a baby.

Did you know?

Cups with lids that help prevent spilling, such as sippy cups, should only be used as a training tool to help a baby learn to drink from a cup.

- Hold the cup for the baby.
- Start with small amounts (2 to 3 fluid ounces) of breastmilk or infant formula in a cup. You do not need to fill the entire cup.
- Let the baby drink very slowly by tilting the cup slightly so only a very small amount of breastmilk or formula leaves the cup. This allows the baby to swallow at his or her own pace.
- Introduce a cup in place of a bottle at mealtime when older children may be drinking from cups around them.
- Allow babies to practice drinking from a cup before they stop using a bottle completely.

Transitioning From a Bottle Too Late

It is recommended that babies stop using a bottle entirely and use only cups by the time they are 18 months, or as developmentally appropriate. Children still drinking from a bottle beyond 18 months of age may:

- be more likely to develop tooth decay.
- drink so much milk that they don't eat enough **solid foods**.
- not get enough nutrients.
- be delayed in developing **feeding skills**.

Whether an infant is drinking from a bottle or a cup, there are many beverages that he or she should and should not try in their first year. **Table 7**, What Should Babies Drink? on **pages 55 and 56** gives more details on what babies should try, and why.

Reflux

Healthy babies may spit up during or after you feed them. Nearly half of all babies have what is known as “**reflux**” in the first few months of life. Reflux is what happens when some of the breastmilk or formula does not stay in the baby’s stomach and the baby spits it out. Reflux usually goes away as babies get older, but sometimes they may need medicine. You can help a baby spit up less by:

- burping the baby at natural breaks during a feeding or at the end of a feeding.
- using the “paced bottle feeding” method.
- holding the baby upright for 30 minutes after giving a bottle.
- stopping the feeding when the baby shows signs of being full. See **Table 2**, How Can I Tell If a Baby Is Full? on **page 9**.

Vomiting is different from spitting up. Vomiting is usually more powerful and in much larger amounts. While reflux is common in babies, vomiting can be a sign of something more serious. If you see any of the following signs, you should let the parents know right away:

- fever
- bile, a green colored substance, in the vomit
- vomiting and fussiness that doesn't stop
- baby refuses more than one feeding
- blood in the vomit or in the diaper
- baby is breathing harder
- baby does not seem as alert as usual

Table 7 What Should Babies Drink?

Beverage	Should I serve this to a baby?	Why or why not?
Breastmilk	Yes	Breastmilk is the best source of nutrition for babies. It is the only food healthy babies need for about the first 6 months of their lives. It is still important for babies even after they start eating solid foods.
Iron-fortified infant formula	Yes	Iron-fortified infant formula is a good alternative to breastmilk. It contains the right amount of nutrients a baby needs to grow and be healthy. Iron-fortified infant formula is not creditable after a baby turns 13 months.
Juice	No	Juice, even 100% juice, does not credit towards a reimbursable meal or snack in the CACFP infant meal pattern. Doctors recommend not giving juice to children under 12 months of age.

Continued on pg 56

Beverage	Should I serve this to a baby?	Why or why not?
Water*	Maybe	Babies do not need to drink water in about the first 6 months of life. Breastmilk and infant formula are the only beverages babies need. Once the baby has started eating solid foods, a baby's health care provider may recommend small amounts of water be given to him or her. On hot days, small amounts of water may also be needed. Parents can check with their health care provider to find out how much and how often their babies can drink water.
Cow's milk or goat's milk	No	Cow's milk and goat's milk are not recommended for babies younger than 12 months of age. These milks have too much protein and minerals for a baby. Cow's milk and goat's milk may not credit towards a reimbursable meal for infants without a signed medical statement from the baby's health care provider.
Sodas, sports drinks, sugar water, and fruit drinks	No	Sodas, sports drinks, sugar water, and fruit drinks should not be served to infants. Added sugars may lead to tooth problems and too much weight gain when he or she is older.
Tea** and Coffee	No	It may be common in some cultures to serve tea or coffee to a baby. However, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, beverages with caffeine, including coffee and teas, are not recommended for babies.

* It is important to make sure the water offered to infants is from a safe source and does not contain unsafe amounts of lead or other contaminants.

** In addition to caffeine, teas may also have other things that can make a child sick. According to the Food and Drug Administration, teas brewed with a spice called "star anise" may cause vomiting, twitching, and seizures.

Caution: Never serve raw milk, or unpasteurized milk, to a baby. Raw milk is milk from cows, goats, or sheep that has not been heated to kill harmful bacteria. This raw, unpasteurized milk may have harmful bacteria that can make a baby very sick.



Many babies are developmentally ready to drink from a cup when they can sit without support and seal their lower lip on the rim of the cup.



Hold babies or make sure they are seated in a high chair during a feeding. Making sure a baby is seated can lower a baby's risk of choking. It can also help prevent another child from drinking from the same bottle.



The only liquids an infant should be served are breastmilk, infant formula, and, around 6 months of age, water.

In This Chapter

In this chapter, you have learned about how to feed a baby using a bottle and cup. In the next chapter, you will learn about feeding a baby solid foods.

Check Your Knowledge

1. **True/False:** Adding cereal to a baby's bottle is good for the baby's health.

2. **A 19-month-old enrolls** at your child care site and is still drinking from a bottle even though he is developmentally ready to drink from a cup. What are some issues that may come from using a bottle at this age?

- A** Because it's easier to drink from a bottle than a cup, the child may drink so much milk that he is not hungry for other foods.
- B** Drinking from a bottle regularly may lead to tooth decay.
- C** Not drinking from a cup may mean that some important feeding skills may not develop, or may be delayed.
- D** All of the above.

3. **The parents of a 9-month-old tell you** that they are going to switch their baby from formula to whole cow's milk. This is because the rest of the family drinks cow's milk and purchasing one type of milk will be cheaper. Which of the following would be an appropriate response:

- A** Cow's milk should not be served to infants (those younger than 12 months) because it has too much protein and minerals that make it hard for a baby to digest.
- B** This may be difficult since cow's milk tastes different. Adding flavor or sweetener can help the baby transition.
- C** Formula can be expensive, but there is a local WIC clinic that can help.
- D** A and C.
- E** All of the above.

ANSWERS: 1. False. Adding cereal to a baby's bottle is not good for the baby's health. • 2. D. These are all issues that may come up from using a bottle at 19 months of age. • 3. D. Let parents know that cow's milk is not recommended for children under 12 months, and recommend community resources for infant formula.