

Finger Feeding

Some advantages of finger feeding:

- A way to feed a baby without introducing a bottle. You should wait to give a bottle until the baby is breastfeeding well for at least 1-2 weeks.
- Helps to train a weak or incorrect suck.
- Assists in retraining a baby who exhibits bottle preference and refuses the breast.

Finger feeding is more like breastfeeding than bottle feeding. In order to finger feed, the baby must keep his tongue down and forward over the gums, with the mouth open wide and the jaw forward. The motion of the tongue and jaw is similar to what the baby does while breastfeeding.

How to Finger Feed

1. Wash your hands. It is better if your nails are short and clean.
2. Position the baby with a small folded blanket under the head so that the baby is not flat.
3. Using paper tape, tape the tube onto your index finger (usually a larger finger works better). Place the tape around the whole finger, around the first joint. Use only paper tape as it is soft and will not harm your baby's mouth. The end of the tube should be even with the end of your finger.
4. Fill the syringe with pumped milk and flush the tubing.
5. Tickle the baby's lips until the baby opens their mouth widely.
6. Insert your finger with the tube into the baby's mouth so that the soft part of your finger is towards the roof of the baby's mouth. Usually the baby will begin to suck on your finger. Slightly curve your finger and allow the baby to draw your finger into his mouth. He may draw your finger up to the second joint. The tongue should come forward to or past the lower gum line with each suck.
7. Look at the lips. The top lip should be up and the bottom lip down. Pull down on the baby's chin if the lower lip is curled in and pull up the top lip is curled under.
8. When the baby is sucking correctly, push the syringe to give about ½ ml. Look at the markings on the syringe.
9. Continue to follow the baby's sucking pattern. If you go too slow the baby will tire before the feeding is done. If you go too fast the baby will choke and leak milk from the mouth. One to two sucks each swallow is the desired suck-swallow sequence. Some babies you will need to train to this pattern.
10. If the baby pauses, you pause and do not push the syringe.
11. **The feeding should take about 10-15 minutes per ounce.**
12. Try to burp the baby halfway into the feeding.
13. Rinse syringes and flush tubing with warm water. **Do not use soap as residual soap in the tubing may cause diarrhea.**
14. Allow equipment to air dry on a clean towel or dry and store in a plastic bag or plastic container.
Make sure the tubing is dry before storing or mold will grow in the tubing.
15. Continue to attempt latch-on.
16. Call for any questions, problems or concerns.