

Breastfeeding

Finger Feeding Baby with a Feeding Tube

This method of feeding should be used only after instruction by a healthcare provider

Finger feeding is used

- as a temporary method of feeding when a mother is not able to breastfeed her baby or baby is unable to latch on the breast.
- to teach baby a better tongue position used for breastfeeding.
- to help entice a baby to want to suck and to breastfeed.

Getting ready

- Make sure your nails are short and clean, especially on the finger you use to finger feed.
- Wash your hands.
- Gather supplies:
 - expressed breast milk (1st choice) or artificial baby milk (formula)
 - 15" #5 French feeding tube
 - syringe
 - tape (optional)
- Place supplies on a clean surface.
- Wash your hands again prior to beginning.

Preparing the feeding tube and syringe

- Hold tip of the syringe in the milk.
- Pull back on plunger to fill syringe with milk.
- Attach syringe to large end of feeding tube.
- Push syringe plunger until air is pushed out of feeding tube and milk fills tube.
- Line feeding tube tip up to meet with the tip of your finger, usually your index finger.
- You may tape feeding tube to the base of your finger to keep it in place.

Remember

- First milk of choice is your own expressed breast milk, second choice is artificial baby milk (formula).
- When finger feeding in hospital, a new feeding tube and new syringe are used with each feed.
- At home, the feeding tube and syringe may be used for 24 hours but must be cleaned after each feed.
- This is a temporary way to feed your baby. Contact your health care provider if feeding problems continue.

Feeding your baby

- Hold your baby in your arms with their head propped upright.
- Use finger closest to the size of the mother's nipple. Touch baby's upper lip with your finger to encourage the baby to open their mouth wide like a yawn.
- Slide your finger into baby's mouth, resting the nail bed on the baby's tongue. The pad of your finger should rest where the hard and soft palate join the roof of the mouth, about 4 cm (1 1/2") into the baby's mouth.
- Gently stimulate baby to suck by massaging the roof of the baby's mouth with your finger.
- After your baby sucks 3 to 4 times, press gently on the syringe plunger. When your baby stops sucking, stop pressing plunger.
- **Do not** press plunger faster than baby can easily suck and swallow.
- **Do not** press hard if syringe sticks. This may force too much milk into baby's mouth and the baby may choke.
- Burp baby after each syringe of milk.
- Record time on the feeding record that your baby was fed and the amount taken.

Cleaning the feeding tube and syringe

In Hospital

- Use a new feeding tube and new syringe with each feed and dispose of after each feed.

At Home

- Take apart syringe.
- Wash tube and syringe with hot water and mild dish soap.
- Use another syringe with hot water to rinse inside of tube by attaching tube to syringe and push hot water through tube.
- Push air through tube with syringe and hang to dry.
- Rinse syringe well and place on a clean dry cloth and allow to air dry.
- Use a new feeding tube and new syringe every 24 hours.

For Information call

- Local Public Health Nurse
- Maternity Visiting Program (306) 766-3700
- Regina Public Health (306) 766-7500
- Lactation Consultant
- Local Health Care Provider
- 24 hour Healthline dial 811

