

BOTTLE REFUSAL

Bottle refusal is common and may take some time. Here are some tips that may help.



For
Parents/
Carers

Start by considering

What teat to choose

There are a variety of teats available. Some things to consider are:

Shape

- Most babies should be able to feed from any type of teat.
- You may need to try a few to find what works best for your baby.

Flow rate

- To test the flow of milk, hold the bottle upside down. The liquid should drip steadily from the teat, not pour out.
- If your baby is having trouble getting milk from the bottle, try a faster teat. If your baby doesn't seem to be swallowing quickly enough, try a slower teat.
- As your baby grows and gets familiar with sucking, they will likely prefer a faster flow teat.



The right position

- Each baby is unique in their preferred feeding positions. Try holding your baby at an upright angle, facing out to look around the room or sitting propped on your legs.
- Keep the neck of the bottle at an angle to make sure there is always milk in the teat. This may reduce the amount of air your baby swallows and might help with burping.

How hungry baby is

- Avoid giving the bottle when your baby is very hungry.
- Babies usually know how much milk they need. Let them decide when they've had enough.
- If your baby goes to sleep during a feed, try rubbing their back or changing their nappy to wake them up. Wait until your baby is fully awake before offering the rest of the milk.
- If your baby doesn't finish all of the milk, throw it away within one hour.



What to do if your baby refuses the bottle

- Try getting a family member or friend to give the bottle to your baby.
- Avoid giving the bottle when baby is upset. Wait until they are more settled.
- Some babies may need to be distracted when first learning to feed from a bottle, such as walking around the room. Others may not like to be distracted and may need quiet and calm. See what works best for your baby
- Use the tip of the bottle teat to tickle baby's upper lip and wait for them to open their mouth wide. This will help them to latch onto the teat like they would to a breast.
- Use the comfort of smell - some parents or caregivers sleep with a burp cloth or use a worn t-shirt and then wrap it around baby's bottle.
- Check the flow of milk. If the flow is too slow, your baby may become frustrated.
- If your baby is old enough, try using a sippy cup.

Avoid bottle-feeding in bed

Bottle-feeding in bed can pose a risk to your baby, so it's important to put your baby to bed without a bottle. The risks include:

- Choking
- Chest and ear infections
- Tooth decay

If your baby gets used to falling asleep with a bottle, they may have trouble settling without the bottle later.

If your baby is regularly refusing the bottle, speak to a Child and Family Health Nurse for advice.



If you have any concerns about your child, contact your local Child and Family Health Nurse, Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health Service (AMIHS), or GP.



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land that we live and work on as the first people of this country, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



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