

## Information for Lactation Consultants

# Alternative Feeding Methods



When an infant needs a supplement for a medical reason, provide it in a way that is least likely to result in subsequent breast refusal. Babies can safely be fed by tube, cup, spoon, finger or bottle.

### Complementary feeding at the breast

#### **Equipment**

5 fr feeding tube, peridontal syringe or commercial feeding tube device (FTD)  
Pumped breastmilk or formula

#### **Procedure**

- Place the infant at breast in cradle or football hold
- Assist the infant to latch-on.
- Slip a 5 Fr feeding tube or peridontal syringe into corner of the infant's mouth or have in place a FTD.
- **or**
- Tape the tubing to the breast so the infant takes both the breast and the tubing in during latch-on. The tubing will be less obtrusive to the infant if it is placed in the corner of the mouth.
- Reward sucking with a small bolus of milk.
- Observe for swallowing and signs of too fast or slow milk flow.



### Cup or spoon feeding

#### **Equipment**

Medicine cup, shot glass or other small cup  
Teaspoon  
Pumped breastmilk or formula

#### **Procedure**

- Assure infant cannot accidentally hit the cup or spoon
- Fill cup not more than 3/4 full
- Place cup on lip with the fluid level with the edge of the cup
- Allow infant to lap or sip
- Leave the cup in place, only removing to refill it
- Let the infant pace the feeding
- Observe for swallowing and signs of too fast or slow milk flow
- **DO NOT POUR MILK IN INFANT'S MOUTH**
- Stop to burp from time to time

Not an appropriate technique for an infant who is not alert, is sleepy or ill.



## Finger feeding

### Equipment

5 fr feeding tube and 5-20 cc syringe or commercially available feeding tube device  
Pumped breastmilk or formula

### Procedure:

- Wash your hands
- Fill the container
- Insert your finger, pad up, slowly in the baby's mouth to the soft palate
- Slip the feeding tube in corner of infant's mouth or have it taped to your finger
- The baby will pull the fluid from the container as he sucks on the finger
- The baby should always be in control of the flow
- Observe for swallowing and signs of too fast or slow milk flow



## Paced Bottle Feeding

### Equipment

Nipple with medium/wide base (infants mouth should be open to 140° similar to breastfeeding) and a slow flow  
Pumped breastmilk or formula

### Procedure

- Hold the baby almost **upright**.
- Hold the bottle almost **horizontal** just filling the nipple with fluid.
- Encourage the baby to take it into his mouth until he has a wide latch (140°) and it is deep in his mouth. Let the baby seek for the nipple.
- The feeding should take 15-30 minutes. If the baby drinks too fast, tip the bottle down or remove it to slow the pace of the feeding.
- Mothers can hold the baby cheek to breast for the feeding.



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