



# Welcome Words

On Healthy Eating—

Breastfeeding, Bottle Feeding,  
Starting Solids

## BREASTFEEDING

Breast milk is your baby's best possible food and has the added advantages of being convenient and inexpensive. Successful breastfeeding is a partnership between you and your baby. If breastfeeding, try to make the most of this time: hold her close, make eye contact, and talk softly to her. Then, family members and friends can have special time to burp or cuddle her. If bottle feeding, your partner or other family members can get some special time with the baby.

### Here are some tips:

- The sucking instinct is inborn, but your baby may not know how to latch on. To help her, support your breast with your fingers under the breast and thumb on top, back from the areolar tissue. Tickle her lips with your nipple, and when she opens wide, pull her onto the breast. (Stroking her cheek will cause her to root for your nipple.) The entire nipple and some of the areola must be inside her mouth to stimulate your letdown reflex (or milk release). Done properly, your nipples will be less likely to get sore. If your nipples are sore, start on the side that's least tender.
- After nursing leave your bra flaps open so your nipples can air dry. You also might try rubbing a little breast milk onto your nipples and letting them air dry. If pain with feeding continues for more than 5 days, seek assistance.
- Tiny cracks in your nipples can bleed as your baby nurses, causing blood to appear in her spit-up. Call your doctor's office or a lactation consultant for suggestions. Be sure you're eating a healthy diet and drinking plenty of fluids to keep your body in balance.
- Check with your doctor before taking any medication, even over-the-counter drugs.

### How do I know if my baby is getting enough milk?

During the first few days after the birth of your baby, you will not be making a lot of milk but your baby is getting all he or she needs from your colostrum. After your milk comes in (between 3-5 days) watch for the following signs—

- If your baby is getting enough milk, she will wet 6-8 times a day and have at least 2 bowel movements.
- Your baby should eat at least 8 times during a 24 hour period. Waking baby to eat maybe be needed to insure he continues to gain weight.

**Baby's weigh-in at your pediatrician's office is the best indicator that baby is getting enough to eat!**

**Hello New Parent!** We hope you will think of Welcome Baby Family Resource Center as your partner in parenting as you meet the wonder and challenges ahead. During the next twelve months, you will receive an edition of Welcome Words covering 6 special topics and including other resources you may find helpful. In addition to Welcome Words, Welcome Baby offers other services and classes that are described in our quarterly newsletter and website: [www.welcomebaby.org](http://www.welcomebaby.org). You are also invited to call us at 919-560-7341 if you have questions or concerns. Welcome Baby is a program of Durham County and Durham County Cooperative Extension. We receive support from Durham's Partnership for Children - a Smart Start Initiative and NCHHS-Department of Community Programs.



## BOTTLEFEEDING

Feeding times should be comforting, and enjoyable for both you and your baby. If you are calm and content, your infant will respond in kind. If you are nervous or uninterested, he may pick up these negative feelings and a feeding problem can result. **Here are some things to keep in mind:**

- You probably will be most comfortable in a chair with arms or pillows that let you prop up your own arms. Cradle him in a semi-upright position and support his head.
- Hold the bottle so that formula fills the neck of the bottle and covers the nipple. This will prevent your baby from swallowing air as he sucks.
- To get him to open his mouth and grasp the nipple, stimulate his rooting reflex by stroking the nipple against the lower lip or cheek. Once the nipple is in his mouth, he will begin to suck and swallow naturally.
- Ask your doctor for information on sterilizing water for making formula and whether you should sterilize bottles. If you make formula in advance, store it in the refrigerator. (Discard unused formula within 24 hours.)
- Once formula has been taken out of refrigeration, throw away any that's left over in a bottle (where bacteria quickly multiply).
- Most babies prefer formula at room temperature. It does not have to be heated. If you do warm it, shake a few drops on your arm to be sure it's not too hot.

### **2 BIG NEVERS**

**Never use a microwave to heat the bottle. This process causes hot spots that won't be noticed in those few drops. Instead, warm the bottle in a pot of hot water.**

**Never prop the bottle in baby's mouth or feed your baby when he's lying down totally flat, because this will increase the risk of choking; also, it may cause formula to flow into the middle ear, where it can lead to an infection.**

**The American Pediatric Association provides guidelines for how much formula to give your baby.**



## BURPING

Don't forget to burp your baby during feeding. This helps her get rid of air swallowed while sucking. You can hold her upright over your shoulder, face down on your lap, or hold her slightly forward in a sitting position while supporting her head, and gently rub or pat her back. A little spit up with a burp is normal. If you're breastfeeding, you can burp her as you change breasts. When bottle-feeding, take a break in the middle to burp.

## STARTING SOLIDS: NOW OR LATER?

Readiness for solid foods (which are actually pureed or strained) depends on your baby's timetable, not yours, the doctor's, or Grandma's. And there's no guarantee that eating a variety of foods will encourage sleep!

### Signs that he's ready for solids include:

- Good head control and the ability to sit without slumping when propped up.
- The disappearance of the tongue thrust reflex, which causes babies to push objects out of their mouths. Place a tiny bit of infant rice cereal thinned with breast milk or formula in your baby's mouth from the tip of a small spoon or your finger. If the food comes right back out after several tries, the reflex is still present. Wait a few weeks before trying again.
- Reaching for and showing interest in table foods.
- The ability to move his tongue back and forth, as well as up and down.
- The ability to draw the lower lip in so that food can be taken from a spoon.

If your baby shows these signs of readiness, it's still important to move slowly. Choose a time when he's alert and happy. Offer each new food alone, waiting at **least 3 days** before adding another. This schedule gives you time to notice if there is an allergic reaction, which may include wheezing, runny nose (though your baby doesn't have a cold), diarrhea, and a rough rash, around the mouth or anus. If your baby shows any of these symptoms, wait a week and then try the food again. If you see the same response, call his health care provider. Remember that your baby's getting all he needs from breast milk or formula. If solids aren't a success, there's no reason to worry about his being undernourished.

### Where to begin:

It's a good idea to begin with rice cereal, which is easy for your baby to digest. Mix with formula or breast milk and try a small amount on a baby spoon.

Families with a strong history of food allergies should avoid the introduction of major food allergens (eggs, milk and milk products, wheat, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish) until after the first year of life. Your child's health care provider can help you decide on their introduction.

In families without a history of food allergies, plain unsweetened yogurt and cheese can be offered at 5-6 months. Introduce finely chopped meats between 7-9 months. **Avoid honey during his first year; it can cause serious illness.**

Never try to force your baby to eat. If he closes his mouth and turns his head away, that's the signal that he's had enough. The more relaxed you can be about these first meals, the better for both of you.

## WEANING

It is important to remember that weaning is a gradual process. **Timing is everything.** The process will go more smoothly if you choose your time to wean whether from the breast or the bottle wisely. Remember, the bottle and or the breast may be a big source of comfort for her, so don't begin the process if she's sick, or hungry, or if a change in her routine (new babysitter, shift in day-care schedule, or after a move) has you and your baby stressed. Don't forgo time spent cuddling—you both may need it.

### Weaning from the breast:

Weaning from the breast can begin at any stage in your child's life based on preference and/or circumstances. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends continuing breastfeeding beyond the first year as long as both mother and child desire to do so. Talk to your doctor about which formula will be best for your baby if your baby is still under a year old.

- Start by eliminating 1 feeding each day for a week to allow the milk production to slow down. Usually the last 2 feedings to go are the one in the morning and the one at night time/bedtime.
- During the weaning process don't offer your child a feeding but do not refuse one either. Try to distract your child with other foods/ drinks in between feedings.
- Try to change your daily routine to help minimize situations when she would like to nurse but don't avoid play and affection. For example, let the co-parent help in the weaning process by putting the child back to sleep if they wake up during the night.
- Shorten the duration of feeding, because once they start eating other foods it is no longer for nutritional value but for comfort.

### Weaning from the bottle:

Pediatricians recommend weaning bottle fed infants completely by 15 months to minimize dental problems and improve nutritional balance.

- Phase out the bottle one feeding session at a time (midday bottles are easier to drop than morning and evening ones) as you introduce the cup. Then wait a few days before you replace the next bottle.
- Slowly reduce the quantity of formula (for babies under a year) or whole milk (in babies over a year) you put in the bottle, and top off each feeding with formula or milk (again, in babies older than 12 months) in a cup. You might also try only serving water in the bottle, one feeding at time, which may make your baby bored enough to give up the bottle entirely — but don't be surprised if it doesn't do the trick; weaning from a bottle may be slow business, and could take a month or more.
- Stashing that treasured bottle out of sight may help your baby yearn for it less. Keep an assortment of tempting cups (brightly colored or graced with favorite characters) in plain view, and experiment with different sipping options — some kids love straws, while others prefer spouts.