



London Health Sciences Centre

Patient Information CUP FEEDING

Cup feeding is a way to feed your baby small amounts of breastmilk. When learning how to cup feed, it is important to work with a person who is skilled at helping breastfeeding families.

Advantages of Cup Feeding

- May prevent nipple confusion.
- May help bring tongue forward.
- Provides another way to feed your baby until a proper latch with swallowing can take place.
- If mom is separated from her infant, she can express some of her milk and another person can feed her baby.

Types of Cups

The cup is a small container with smooth edges that will hold 1 - 2 oz. (30 - 60 mL) of breastmilk or formula. You may have a suitable cup at home, or you can purchase a cup made for cup feeding an infant.



How to Cup Feed

1. Your baby should be in a calm, alert state. You can calm your baby by allowing him/her to suck on your finger. Gently insert your finger with the fat pad to the roof of your baby's mouth and your fingernail resting on your baby's tongue.
2. Wrap your baby securely, to prevent little hands from hitting the cup. Place a cloth under the chin for drips.
3. Support your baby in a comfortable, upright sitting position. Your baby's neck and shoulders need to be supported.
4. Fill the cup so it is only 1/3 full to avoid spills. Take the cup and gently touch your baby's bottom lip until the mouth opens.
5. The cup should be slightly tipped (at a 45-degree angle) with the edge of the cup firmly in the corners of your baby's mouth. Keep the cup tipped until the milk touches your baby's lips and tongue.

MILK SHOULD NOT BE POURED INTO YOUR BABY'S MOUTH!

6. Your baby will set a sipping rhythm which includes short rest periods or pauses. Ideally your baby's tongue will move forward and lap up the milk. Allow your baby to feed at his/her own pace. Do not rush the feed. Keep the cup touching your baby's lips during feeding pauses.

How to Clean the Cup

1. Wash the cup in warm, soapy water.
2. Rinse the cup well in clean water.
3. Air dry the cup on a clean paper towel or dry the cup with a clean paper towel.
4. Store the cup in a clean covered container or a sealed plastic bag.

How to Help Your Baby to Breastfeed

- Place your baby skin to skin many times each day.
- Watch for early feeding cues and try to latch your baby on to your breast before your baby is crying.
- If your baby does not latch, cup feed a small amount and then offer your breast again.
- Talk to a health care provider who has experience helping breastfeeding mothers for other suggestions to help your baby learn to breastfeed.

Videos showing how to cup feed can be viewed at:

<https://ibconline.ca/breastfeeding-videos-english/>

<https://globalhealthmedia.org/portfolio-items/cup-feeding/?portfolioCats=191%2C94%2C13%2C23%2C65>

References

- Hoover, K. (2016) Feeding methods. In K. Wambach & J. Riordan. (Eds.) *Breastfeeding and Human Lactation*. (5th ed.). Burlington, MA. Jones and Bartlett Learning. 247-249
- Walker M. (2017) *Breastfeeding management for the clinician: Using the evidence*. (4th ed.). Burlington, MA. Jones & Bartlett Learning, pp. 448, 275-276.
- Watson-Genna, C. (2017). Supporting Sucking Skills in Breastfeeding Infants 3rd Ed. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning, p. 195.
- Watson-Genna, C. (2009) *Selecting and Using Breastfeeding Tools: Improving Care and Outcomes*. Amarillo, TX: Praeclarus Press, pp. 161-172.

Originally developed by the Middlesex London Breastfeeding Coalition in August 1998 and revised in August 2009, August 2015. Currently revised by the Breastfeeding Coalition of Southwestern Ontario with representation from London Health Sciences Centre, Middlesex London Health Unit, Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital, St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital, Chatham-Kent Health Alliance, Southwestern Public Health.

December 2019