



Guidelines for Cup Feeding

Cup feeding is an alternative feeding method for breastfeeding infants. Times when this may be necessary include:

- When you are breastfeeding but can't be present for all feedings.
- If you are ill after delivery and you can't breastfeed.
- If your baby's sucking and swallowing reflex is underdeveloped.
- If your baby has hypoglycemia, jaundice or dehydration.

Step-by-step directions

1. Swaddle your baby to control his or her hands.
2. Support your baby in an upright sitting position.
3. Fill the 30 cc medicine cup at least half full with breast milk, colostrum (the milk that appears the first few days after birth) or formula.
4. Place brim of cup at the outer corners of the upper lip, gently touching the lower lip. The baby's tongue can be inside or outside the cup. (*Many infants prefer their tongue under the lip of the cup.*)
5. Tip the cup so the milk is just touching your baby's lips. **Do not pour the milk into the baby's mouth.**
6. Babies will usually sip or lap the milk.
7. Allow time for your baby to swallow.
8. Let your baby set the pace of the feeding. Limit the feeding to 30 minutes to help prevent your baby from getting tired.
9. Stop to burp your baby from time to time.
10. Leave the cup in position during the feeding. When baby rests, do not move the cup out of position, but make sure that no milk is entering into the mouth until he or she starts feeding again.
11. Do not attempt to cup feed an infant who is not alert or who is very sleepy.

Cup feeding pros and cons

Cup feeding allows your baby to set the pace of the feed. However, spilled milk or drooling of milk can be a problem if your baby is not gaining enough weight. Proper technique is very important to lower the risk of aspiration.

Do not cup feed any baby that is likely to aspirate the milk or choke on it

This includes babies with a poor gag reflex, babies who are generally lethargic, or those who have been diagnosed with a neurological problem.

Online resources

Visit kp.org/mydoctor to:

- View most lab results and check your preventive health reminders
- Email your doctor
- Use interactive online tools to help keep you and your family healthy

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.